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THE CONCERN OF THE COMMON MAN

THE electoral picture is not that suggested by some of our national newspapers. Candidates are not besieged by hysterical mobs or ruffian gangs, but are seriously and persistently questioned by groups of citizens, some well informed, some bewildered, but most of them genuinely anxious to know, to understand and to make up their minds as honestly as they are allowed. If they are not everywhere permitted to achieve this moderate ambition, it is because from the beginning the Beaverbrook campaign, to which the Premier so unhappily lent his support, has been designed to bedevil the issues, to malign with every foul innuendo men who have borne the strain of the war years as Mr. Churchill's colleagues, and to attempt to frighten the less politically conscious voter by Red scares, by nonsense about Gauleiter Laski, the threat to the nest-egg and the Labour Gestapo—which has even in one constituency given birth to a Tory leaflet "Remember Belsen." These scares, from their promoters' point of view, seem to have been premature. Their effect has been wearing off; and to fill in the interval until some eve-of-poll stunt, a triumphal tour has been staged for the Premier. Crowds have cheered the compeller of victory, because we are all grateful for his war leadership; but whether the votes of millions of men and women who are also conscious of their own part in the war will be affected, no one can tell.

No one can tell because there has rarely been an election in which imponderables have been so numerous. What influence, for example, has been exerted by the nightly electoral broadcasts, in which radio technique may have counted for as much as merit of argument? How far will it be thought "ungrateful" to vote against a candidate on whom the Prime Minister has bestowed a coupon? How many of the less thoughtful electors have been swayed by the notion, sedulously inculcated by Conservative canvassers, that it would be wrong to vote against "the Government" in favour of "politicians" out to break the national unity which carried us to victory. Add the considerations that there are 296 three-cornered contests in single-member constituencies, that no elector under 31 years of age has voted before in a general election, that hundreds of thousands of voters are disfranchised by change of residence since the register was compiled, and that many constituencies (not least the rural Tory strongholds) have been transformed since 1935 by influx of war-workers: the figures of Parties which the counting will disclose defy all prediction.

Yet, though expression of the people's will may to some extent be distorted by the hazards of our electoral system and by the irrelevancies of stunts and personalities, it is evident throughout the country that the electorate is thinking seriously of the problems which touch their lives—housing, full employment, social security, the efficiency of Britain's industries and, not least, of coal-mining and agriculture. These have taken on a new electoral significance in an age when the voter, whose intelligence Lord Beaverbrook treats with such contempt, is conscious of himself as "the common man," who has been promised "freedom from want," and knows that to-day there is no technical barrier to the fulfilment of the promise. A country that has been spending £14 millions a day during the war can afford the fraction of this sum that is necessary to provide houses, jobs, "Beveridge," a rising standard of life, and a proper education for the next generation. The voter must indeed be slow-witted who does not see that it is an unplanned and class system that prevents the wealth of Britain being shared fairly by the people who earn it.

The Left offers him a short-term programme of Socialist planning—on this occasion, a practical and coherent programme. From the Right the voter has heard only clamour for the removal of all controls—on prices, luxury production and get-rich-quick profits—and Mr. Churchill's personal insistence that he proposes to implement a Four Years' Plan whose content has never been defined or endorsed by the Tory Party. Only from fragments of disclosed "National" intention—to preserve private enterprise in coal-mining, regardless of inefficiency and falling output; and in housing, even though the result be dwellings only for sale—can the voter deduce the shape of this mysterious masterpiece of Tory reconstruction. Told by Mr. Churchill that monopolist price-rings are to be stormed like the Siegfried Line and by Mr. Butler that this operation is to take the form of a Tribunal of Inquiry (with powers undefined); promised full employment if only (as Mr. Lyttelton demands) his employers are "freed from their shackles"—he may be pardoned if he fails to see why Tory rule in the future should in fact be better than it was last time. He is likely to see more clearly that the "great majority" which the Prime Minister demands as a demonstration of "national unity" would mean the domination of Parliament, as it meant in the inter-war years, of a mass of complacent reactionaries crowding the back benches—the caretakers at home of property, privilege and profit, the friends of every anti-democratic group abroad.

No "Politics" in Germany

In Berlin the representatives of 17 revived Free Trade Unions have been encouraged by the Russians to form a Trades Council, and the Berlin Communist Party has been allowed to re-register itself. By contrast, in the British Zone, not only are no political parties tolerated, but the latest news is that the Military Government officials have dissolved the Trades Council (*Sozialistische Freie Gewerkshaft*) set up by the anti-Nazi trade union leaders in Hamburg. On December 14th last General Eisenhower broadcast to German workers an assurance of their right to establish Free Trade Unions. On the plea that trade unions are illegal if they engage in "political" activities, Field-Marshal Montgomery is, in effect, dishonouring that pledge. For, with the formation of political parties banned, how can the German workers, except through their trade union machinery, make any representations about such "political" issues as rationing, prices or the activities of the dubiously democratic German officials who have been selected to run municipal administrations? In Cologne, where a notoriously Right Wing Catholic, Herr Adenauer, is Burgomeister, demonstrations of protest have been suppressed with shooting. In Hamburg, though the Burgomeister, Rudolf Petersen, is a "non-political" representative of the big commercial interests, an extreme reactionary, Schoenfelder, has been appointed Police President. The war, we would remind the Field-Marshal, was not fought to deny German workers the right of industrial organisation.

The Stake in Syria

The British Note on the Syrian question, curt in its style and controversial in its substance, is a deplorable document, which has deeply wounded the feelings of a friendly nation. It was issued after the French Consultative Assembly had passed a conciliatory resolution, calling for the early conclusion of a Franco-British alliance. This overture the Note ignored, nor did it attempt in any way to heal the wound we have dealt to French pride, or to meet the French request for an impartial investigation of the facts. To say that we do not wish to supplant France in the Levant is quite unconvincing, when in fact our military authorities have taken control and are interning the French garrison and evacuating French civilians. The French are justifiably sore over our unqualified support of the Syrian Government, in view of the fact that its gendarmerie, which we armed, joined the attacks on their troops and in some instances led them. The French Government has now made two suggestions for an impartial inquiry into all the facts, both of which we have rejected. It may well be that the United Nations' Organisation, which is not yet in being, cannot take action in this dispute. But is that a good reason for refusing to improvise an impartial Commission, which could investigate the facts and issue its recommendations for a settlement? If the Foreign Office were willing to call in third-party judgment, there would be no difficulty in discovering an impartial Government to serve.

Franco's Neutrality

General Franco's claim that he was a neutral in the war between the Axis and the Allies has been finally exposed by the discovery of a German diplomatic memorandum reporting his 1941 negotiations with Mussolini. He gave as the reason for his non-belligerent adherence to the Axis, the poor equipment of his army. He was, however, prepared to declare war, if he were promised Gibraltar and French Morocco; he added the stipulation that German formations would be required to stiffen his own troops in the assault on the Rock. Nothing came of this conditional offer, because the Axis needed all its forces for the struggle in North Africa. We need waste no ink in exposing the sham "democracy" which Franco is now parading. The Cortes which he talks of summoning is nominated, not elected. The administration is carried on only by the continual use of exceptional powers over the lives and liberties of citizens. It is believed that over 200,000 Republicans are still in concentration camps and those who have been released are ticket-of-leave men, subject to the daily control of the clergy and the police. The only chance for this hated and unsuccessful regime to survive is that it may succeed in buying American and British support by lavish commercial concessions. One outstanding instance is the facilities it has granted to American aviation companies, which are now constructing near Madrid one of the biggest air-ports in the world. Oil-refineries are another possibility, and it is said that British capitalists are also angling for the Dictator's favours. These are the influences that seek to counter-balance the unanimous vote of all the States assembled at San Francisco, which barred Franco's Spain from membership of the future World Organisation.

Parity at Simla

The prospects of the Wavell offer to India are so far good that both Congress and the Muslim League are taking part in the Simla Conference, and judging by their newspapers, both of them wish that it shall succeed. The awkward issue on the threshold is that Congress cannot allow itself to be classed as a purely Hindu party, while the Muslim League claims that it is the sole spokesman of the Muslim community. The Viceroy's plan, if correctly reported, may circumvent this difficulty. It is said to be that the Council shall be composed of four Congress Hindus and one Hindu from another party; four League Muslims and one Muslim from another party; one representative Sikh, one Member for the Scheduled Castes ("untouchables"), one Parsi and one Anglo-Indian, with Lord Auchinleck and the Viceroy himself. It remains to be seen whether a Council formed in this way, without an Indian Premier, can ever become an effective and united team. The real issue on which the future of the offer turns is, however, that its implied basis is parity between Hindus and Muslims. The Muslim League will abandon Pakistan only if it gets equal representation with the Hindus in every organ of the future federation. The orthodox and sectarian Hindu Mahasabha is preparing to resist this surrender by a *hartal* (one-day strike). This fundamental issue can be postponed for a time, but no federal constitution can be drafted until it is settled.

Signor Parri

Public memory is short. When correspondents described the new Italian Premier as a "relatively unknown figure," how few people recollected that at the Savona Trial, eighteen years ago, Farruccio Parri, then in his thirties, stood in the dock side by side with Carlo Rosselli, charged with treasonably contriving the escape from Italy to Corsica of Turati, the veteran Socialist leader. For that "crime" Roselli and Parri, who was then writing courageous articles in the *Corriere della Sera,* were sentenced to ten months' imprisonment dating from their arrest. This meant immediate release. (The trial resembled that of Dimitrov in Nazi Germany; it turned into an indictment of the regime, and the result was that public trials for political offences abruptly came to an end.) However, since both Parri and Roselli had already been condemned by a Police Tribunal to five years on Lipari, there they were sent, in chains, on their "release." Rosselli escaped to Paris. There he founded the "Giustizia e Libertà" organisation, which he led until his death at the hands of Ciano's French hirelings. Parri, who was still suffering in 1927 from wounds received in the first World War, served his full term on "the islands." Afterwards he worked for Rosselli's organisation underground in Italy; and in September, 1943, after the Italian capitulation, he shared with General Cadorna and Longo (the International Brigader) joint command of the Freedom Volunteers in Northern Italy. His appointment as Prime Minister comes after a life spent in fighting for liberty.

Liberals' Housing Policy

In last Monday's *News Chronicle* Sir William Beveridge set forth the Liberal Party's policy on full employment—for the most part along familiar lines. There was, however, in his article an ambiguity that needs clearing up. Advocating a great public loan for housing, he rightly stressed the very great difference which the rate at which the money is borrowed makes to the rent of a house—2 per cent. on a £750 house means 6*s.* on the rent, he explained. He then went on to say that it did not matter who *built* the houses, as long as they were built with the aid of cheap money. We agree; but it does make a great deal of difference who *owns* the houses when they have been built. Private enterprise *building* is one thing, and is usually employed by municipalitie in their housing schemes. Private enterpris *housing,* which connotes speculative building, i something quite different. Yet Sir William if we read him aright, appears to have mixe them up. The Labour Party urges that municipalities, aided by cheap government credit, shoul place most of the orders and own most of th houses, thus ensuring their availability for lettin at reasonable rents. If houses built with the ai of public capital at low interest are to be privatel owned, what is to prevent the suppliers of them from forcing up rents and selling prices?

Britain and World Trade

An issue of which little has been heard durin the election campaign, but which is bound t bulk large among the problems with which th next Government must deal, is that of Britis export policy. By Article 7 of the Lease-Len Agreement both this country and the Unite States are pledged to pursue a policy of worl trade expansion, not to add to existing tarif barriers and to work for the elimination generally of commercial restriction and discrimination Congress has given President Truman, throug the Doughton Act, the power to negotiat reciprocal trade agreements providing for tarif reductions of as much as 50 per cent. on particula classes of goods; and informed opinion in th U.S.A. is increasingly recognising that the healt of American economy is dependent on a larg expansion of U.S. imports. It would be a grav misfortune if this new American trend toward liberalism in trade policy were to be reversed— as it would be if Britain's response were to b dictated by Lord Beaverbrook and the exponent of the "closed Empire" theory of trade. On th other hand, Britain is now a debtor country whos exports must be increased to a level perhaps 5 per cent. (in volume) above that of 1938 if sufficient imports are to be paid for, without borrowin abroad, to support full employment and an acceptable standard of living. How far we shall b able to go in the direction of free, multilatera trading depends, first and foremost, on th willingness of the United States to refrain fron exploiting its strength as a creditor nation in a endeavour to stave off unemployment (when th post-war boom in its domestic market is over by "forcing" exports financed by loans, and thu capturing markets on which we depend for sale of British goods.

Edward Whitley

We deeply regret to record the death of Edwar Whitley, Chairman of the STATESMAN & NATIO Publishing Company. He was one of the origina group of Fabians who founded the NE STATESMAN in 1913. He had been associate with Beatrice and Sidney Webb in the struggl to carry out the Minority Report of the Poor La Commission in 1909. When Mrs. Webb appeale for funds to finance a new weekly paper to expres Fabian principles, and provide ammunition fo Socialist speakers, Edward Whitley was one o the first to respond. In 1931, when THE NATIO amalgamated with the NEW STATESMAN, Edwar Whitley became chairman of the new combine company. During the last few years his healt had not been good, but his death came as sudden blow to his friends and associates. Th journal owed much to his loyal and generou support in the lean years which followed the la war. He was proud of its subsequent progre and success—he had certainly never envisage the day when its circulation should reach th present figure of nearly 70,000 copies weekl Supremely disinterested about personal gain, h was zealous in safeguarding the interests an standards of the paper. His own strong principle included the greatest respect for independence judgment in others. Of all men he was the mo kindly, modest and tolerant, an admirable chai man and the most solid and devoted of friends.

WORLD PERSPECTIVE

In the Khaki election of 1918 hysterical agitation about Germany was combined with a wave of idealism about the League of Nations. In this election Germany provides no electoral issue, and all the responsible Party leaders agree about the paramount importance of friendship between Britain, America and Russia. San Francisco provides a vague hope, not a focus of controversy or enthusiasm. Foreign politics for the moment have become a matter of the Big Three, shortly to meet in Berlin. Mr. Churchill's invitation to Mr. Attlee to accompany him to Berlin in his capacity as Privy Councillor was a sensible gesture, and a singular commentary on his sweeping denunciations of the party which Mr. Attlee leads. On the issues arising out of the Yalta Agreement there is in fact no substantial difference between Labour and the Conservatives. "Continuity of policy" in Anglo-American-Soviet relations would only be endangered if the more virulently anti-Soviet type of Tory were to be in office after the election. That this is a real danger is clear from the appointment of Lord Dunglass as Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs in the Caretaker Government. He spoke in the House against the Yalta Agreement. With Mr. Eden ill, he and Lord Lovat, the other Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs (almost equally anti-Soviet), may already be exercising some influence at the Foreign Office.

The San Francisco Charter means much if the Great Powers agree; nothing if they quarrel. On a long view the only way in which peace can be safeguarded is by a genuine federation of nations. History provides outstanding examples, such as the United States of America, in which governments have come together and delegated to a central authority the control of their foreign policy and their armed forces. The League of Nations did not follow this pattern, though many hoped that a federation might in time be evolved at Geneva. Any such development depended on the readiness of the Member States loyally to accept the obligations of the Covenant, to pool their armed strength and submit disputes to arbitration. It failed primarily because the great Powers continued to behave as sovereign, competing States, and were not willing to subordinate their own economic, strategic or political interests to the common necessity of preventing aggression. San Francisco differs in that it does not pretend that States are equal, and makes no gesture of binding the great Powers to act against their separate interests. It accepts as a fact the concentration of force in the hands of a few Powers, and sets up machinery by which the smaller nations have the opportunity of bringing disputes before the Council and pressing for their peaceful solution. The division of the world into spheres of interest is not modified by the formal acceptance of trusteeship, and it is underlined by the existence of separate alliances within the general obligation to prevent aggression. We are left to-day much in the position of citizens of a town living under gangster rule, who, giving up any hope of an efficient administration and an honest police force, welcome as the lesser evil an agreement among the rival armed groups to respect each other's exclusive areas of control, and to meet regularly to discuss disputes where their spheres of interest overlap. Al Capone's machine guns command some sidewalks; Jack Diamond's power is undisputed in the next street. But on the pavement at the corner Al Capone and Jack Diamond promise not to shoot each other but, when disputes arise, to call in the local shopkeepers and other interested inhabitants to take part in their discussions.

That this is a precarious basis for peace must be obvious to everyone. Hope can only lie along the lines of developing these periodic discussions into friendly meetings of wider scope; gradually the rival groups may discover that their best interests lie in the development of joint services for the community as a whole. In course of time the advantages of a common authority may become obvious. Given time, intelligence and an awakened public opinion, such a development is not impossible when the alternative is the universal catastrophe of a third world war.

The first stage must be a settlement of outstanding issues between the big Powers, followed by a period in which suspicions grow less. For that reason the acceptance of a new Polish Government which carries out the formula of the Yalta Agreement is of the greatest importance. To fulfil the promise of the present agreement two things are required. On their side the Russians must realise that the Western world expects the new Warsaw Government to enjoy a genuine autonomy. It is a welcome sign that a member of the Peasants' Party is Minister of Home Affairs; he will have the duty of making the arrangements for the future democratic election. At the same time it must be remembered that Poland had no more than a momentary taste of democracy after the last war, and that after centuries of foreign government, decades of Fascist rule, and the final experience of war and German occupation, Polish conditions cannot be comparable in any way with those of a western country where the secret ballot and popular representation are established habits. The Western Powers, on their side, should immediately recognise the Warsaw Government, shut down the activities of the London Poles, once again vividly exposed in the trial of Okulicki and his companions in Moscow, and disband the emigré Polish Army. There are now some half million Poles in zones of occupation under the Western Allies, most of whom, given reasonable hope for their country's independence, will want to return. Unfortunately, the officers in charge of repatriation and the Polish officials of UNRRA are nominees of the London Poles. If the Western Allies cease to give moral or financial support to the London Poles, there will be a swift rally of exiled Poles to the new Warsaw administration, and a grave source of international friction will be on the way to solution.

Among the other issues that must be settled when the Big Three meet is the future of Germany. It will be fatal if there is competition for German support between the Allies. As it is, the Russians are liquidating Nazi, military, and reactionary German groups and at the same time rapidly setting the mass of Germans to work and offering them a tolerable future. The Western Allies, on the other hand, seem still to be without a policy except the escapist formula of non-fraternisation—which does not, in fact, exclude a good deal of fraternisation with just those social elements who are most dangerous. A common understanding should be reached when the Big Three meet; it should extend beyond a political formula and should include joint arrangements for the development of Europe's communications, supply and feeding services. If the Big Three could see beyond political issues they would find their truest basis of harmony in raising the standard of living for the whole Continent, which would involve setting up international agencies to develop Europe's electricity and water power and to create centres of economic and social welfare which would transcend political frontiers and gradually reduce their importance. The powers given for these purposes to the new Economic and Social Council are shadowy. Political questions still dominate the thoughts of the Big Three. They are primarily concerned with the problems of the war in the Far East and its aftermath. In Europe they have to deal with the overheated nationalisms of Slav countries; with the deplorable effort of King Leopold to return to a country which does not want him; with the tragic situation in Greece, where British action has not prevented terrorism by the Right or removed the danger of renewed civil war; with an Italy which seeks, in spite of Allied discouragement, to rebuild a democracy. Meanwhile France, herself one of the Big Five, asks that her dispute with Britain over Syria be submitted to the new United Nations machinery which, as Mr. Stettinius blandly explains, is not yet ready for use.

Some at least of the difficulties we are now experiencing are the inevitable outcome of the war. Armed strife in one part or another of Europe and the Middle East continued for four years after 1918. It takes time for passions to cool, ambitions to find their limit, and prudence to reassert itself. When that time came after the last war the essentials, which were international economic agencies and political federation, had been forgotten, and in Britain and America governments had assumed office which had no interest in the development of international institutions. Western capitalism had reasserted itself; slumps followed booms; unemployment overshadowed all else; tariffs and other desperate expedients were used to shut markets for groups of manufacturers; the Hun-baiters rearmed Germany and isolated Russia, encouraged Fascism and made the path easy for Hitler. In this perspective it is hard to exaggerate the danger of a Tory Government, which would not for long be controlled by Mr. Churchill, but would only too probably be run by the same Big Business group which again wants to end "controls" and start again the process which began with the queues of British unemployed in 1921 and ended with the sale of rubber and nickel to Germany in 1939. No Government will have an easy task at home or abroad after the war, but we have a better chance with one which aims sincerely at public welfare rather than individual profit and international co-operation rather than economic imperialism.

A MIDLAND ELECTION

Coventry East is a pretty average Midland constituency. At one end it includes the Cathedral—the ruined apse exquisitely beautiful against the after-glow of the sunset as we drive back to our hotel each night at 11.30 p.m. Thence it runs out through clustered motor, machine-tool and chemical factories; a sprawling belt of neat garden-villas; two or three pleasant country villages slowly merging into suburbia to end dramatically and symbolically in the towering slag-heap of a coal mine. Where Coventry differs from other Midland towns is in its far higher civic consciousness based on long tradition of craft and skill which has made possible the development from watch-making through bicycles and motor cars to the vast shadow-factories for aero-engines. Where it differs from a Northern or Welsh constituency is in its far higher standard of living which makes the thousands of immigrants who have come here since the war feel that Coventry streets are paved with gold. And then, of course, there is the aftermath of the Blitz. There is plenty of money here—but very few houses or shops.

Under normal circumstances this should be a fairly safe Labour seat. But to-day there are four candidates—Conservative, Labour, Liberal and Communist; and it is possible that the Tory may squeeze in on a split Progressive vote. The Communists have been very active here during the war, and are keen to test their strength—in the name of working-class unity, of course—against the Labour Party. The result may be a surprise to both.

A candidate, of course, is in the worst possible position to get an objective picture of the mood of the electors. He lives in an atmosphere of almost overpowering friendship, hospitality and socialist goodwill. He speaks to meetings of the converted; and, even at the street corner and on the doorstep, it is largely his own supporters whom he sees. I can only hope therefore to record what it feels like to be a Labour candidate in the General Election of 1945.

My first impression—after nearly two years overseas and out of contact with working people—is of the thoughtfulness and seriousness of the electorate. We are in considerable difficulties here, because, in our print orders from Transport House, we absurdly underestimated the reading capacity of the electorate. Every 2*d.* or 3*d.* pamphlet on sale at open-air meetings is immediately snapped up and paid for usually not with coppers but with silver. *Let Us Face the Future* is easily the most popular; followed by the pamphlet on New Zealand which reminds people what ten years of Socialist government can do, and in particular, that old age pensions in New Zealand are now 32*s.* 6*d.* in marked contrast with the meagre increases under the new Social Security Bill. I believe that if we had had in stock 40,000 Penguins we could have sold them easily. The free literature is glanced through and tossed away: what we sell is taken home and thrown back at us in the next open-air meeting, always in the form of precise and thoughtful questions on what we shall do when we get power.

The key issue of the campaign is of course, unemployment—or, to give it its modern name, redundancy. In almost every factory it is becoming the central topic of conversation. As each war job is finished or nearing completion, men and women are informed, if they are lucky, that they can have another job, but at old peacetime rates. If they won't accept this—and it often means a fantastic drop in earnings—they are told that they will be declared redundant. Here one sees in its most exaggerated form the inhumanity of the Tory way of life. No one has tried to explain to the workpeople the plan under which the switchover will take place. No one has taken them into his confidence and said: "This is how we won the war and, now, this is how we are going to win the peace." No, the war is over and without a word of thanks and explanation the worker is told that he must go back to normal conditions of insecurity.

That perhaps is why full employment through national planning arouses such intense interest here. The only bugbear—and it is a very serious one—is the Essential Work Order. Time after time I have been asked by men and women whether it would be possible to have national planning in peacetime without compulsory direction of labour; and angry fathers record with fierce indignation what has happened to their sons who became Bevin boys. It might have been wiser if Mr. Bevin had prevented his name being associated with a plan which was only adopted because Mr. Churchill refused the nationalisation of the coal mines during the war.

I have not met any interest here in the remoter issues which fill up so much space in the national dailies and in the broadcast speeches. Abstract questions such as controls versus freedom and complicated stories like the Attlee-Laski incident seem terribly far away in the streets and factories here. What people want to hear about is "redundancy," housing, pensions and what will happen to ex-Servicemen after the war. I get the feeling that whereas Lord Beaverbrook and Mr. Churchill are trying to revive the good old-fashioned spirit of the hustings, down here people want to discuss bread-and-butter politics as practically as possible. The doctors and the insurance clerks want to know exactly how they will fit into a National Health Service. The women, how soon they can expect enough secondary schools to provide places for all those who pass the examination, and when they can expect better rations.

That is why one's chief job is not addressing meetings in halls but getting out into the streets. Summer, with its long evenings, is the ideal time for an election, and the loud-speaker in the motor-car has made it possible to talk to people instead of shouting at them. Outside the factory gate at the lunch-hour men and women lie at their ease on the grass bank and the meeting soon turns into a discussion. And in the late evening, when the pubs shut, a really large crowd collects every night, and, often with a good deal of hilarity and question and answer, goes on to 11.30 p.m.

I have a feeling that the whole apparatus of electioneering—the canvass card, the polling card, the election address—has now become a traditional form, still observed by all candidates for old times' sake, but with extraordinarily little influence on the voting. This election will be decided by talk in the home, after listening to the election broadcasts, and to arguments in the factories, in the working men's clubs and in the queues. The bands of canvassers knocking on the doors and religiously marking up their cards can neither influence the issue nor achieve even an approximate estimate of the result. The old-fashioned indoor meeting where full-sized men and women contort themselves in the acute discomfort of sitting on children's desks, seems strangely out of date when one can hear all the prominent national leaders comfortably at home or read them next day in the morning paper. As for the candidate, his job is a very limited one. He has to appeal to the very small number of voters who have not made up their mind to vote for one or other of the Parties and can therefore be swayed by the appeal of personality. But to achieve this he must get inside the home, the trade union branch and the club, or come to close quarters with his microphone in the streets.

What of the Tories? Certainly their organisation on which they relied in the past for rounding up the non-political voter is in sad disarray. Like the Labour Party they have suffered the full consequences of four years of political truce, with the result that the Communist Party is the only fully organised Party. Consequently the Tories have to rely almost exclusively on the mass appeal of the Prime Minister's personality. Before the election started that appeal was immensely powerful. But it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that each successive broadcast by Mr. Churchill and each new extravagance of the *Daily Express* has reduced the majesty of the national figurehead and brought it down to the level of a Party and even of a class figurehead. Despite the name National, the election here is a contest between the Tories and the rival contestants for the leadership of the working-class. And the basic issue has become: do you want an employer to represent you or someone who will fight for your interest?

I am quite sure that the local Tory leadership is acutely embarrassed by this development. It is worth noticing, for instance, that the local evening paper is trying in every way possible to distance itself from the stunts of the Conservative dailies, by giving a fair statement in its news columns of all points of view and by preserving in its comment a pontifical moderation worthy of the London *Times.* So far, the Tory candidates have observed a similar moderation and it will be interesting to see if they can keep this up until July 5th. Mr. Churchill's fleeting visit has been written up with wild exaggeration. His van was not wrecked; he arrived two hours late; spoke for only ten minutes; and could not use his loud-speakers in the press of the crowd round his car. I doubt if this appearance did much to counteract the cheapening effect of his broadcast orations.

Thirty thousand Coventry workers will be disfranchised because the election falls in their holiday week. Add to these the many thousands who will discover on polling day that their names are not to be found on this lamentable election register and the endless confusion about proxy voting for Service men overseas. The conclusion is inevitable that the Tory refusal to postpone the election till October when the holidays are over and the electoral register could have been brought up to date may very seriously affect the results.

R. H. S. Crossman

PLAGIARISM

"One Empire; One Leader; One Folk!"
Is the Tory campaign master-stroke.
As a National jest,
It is one of the best,
But it's not an original joke.

RELEGATED

[Chance enables us to publish the following portions of an unposted letter which appears to have been addressed to the Secretary of State for War. Some pages are evidently missing, and the signature is unfortunately undecipherable.]

. . . And so, dear Sir James, if one of your obscure ex-legionaries may thus familiarly address you, I am venturing to write you this "thank you" letter now that the party's over. Though I cannot say that six years of it were all great fun, we owe it to you that the leave-taking was entertaining and edifying. We old sweats who assembled last week at the Dispersal Unit may have been, and certainly looked like, a pretty "withered garland" of the war; but for us, even though somebody had forgotten to tell the Unit we were coming, the afternoon had its compensations.

In Serial Parties, as if embarking (and were we not?) for a civilian D-day, we had our Release Books stamped, docketed and restamped with clockwork efficiency. You had forgotten nothing—not even the 4 oz. of Liquorice Allsorts which we eventually found in the ready-packed parting bag (on payment) from N.A.A.F.I. And, to make sure that we missed none of the delights of civilian freedom, you arranged that the procuring of Identity Card, ration book and clothing coupons should be a treat in store for us, at our leisure. If some of us, being countrymen, live several miles from the nearest National Registration Office, is it not well that we should be reminded, particularly with polling day approaching, that post-war life is to be based on individual enterprise?

Or did we mistake your meaning? Perhaps, rather, at Olympia, whither a twenty-seater lorry bumped us bravely to equip us externally for our "reallocation," you intended to show us what shopping would be like in a Socialist State. Not, of course, that we were denied freedom of choice: there were grey suits and blue, brown sports jackets and checkered. But we shall be identifiable, I think—Olympia's gratified clients—as long as the kit lasts. Not very long, you retort? That, I suppose, was in the mind of the friendly corporal who ticked off on my "entitlement sheet" the acquisition of a pork-pie hat made seemingly of viridian cardboard which, he warned me, should not be exposed to rain. I have doubts, too, of the durability of those socks (two pairs) and of the dye—raw sienna blended strangely with puce—in my hacking coat.

But these are churlish, captious criticisms. Frankly, I disbelieved the R.A.S.C. laddie from Glasgow (he hadn't a single stripe to his credit) who had a story of the shirt which had accidentally got wet. Paper-thin though it be, mine looks as if it will successfully survive at least one visit to the laundry. And if I am so careless as to send to the wash the pair of sweet little black links which, you ordered, should be presented to each of us as a farewell gift at the exit turnstile, the loss should be reparable: in the uniformity of the released there will be many spares which laundries can redistribute.

. . . Veterans twice over, each carrying our standardised "civvies" in a neat cardboard box, we emerged into the Hammersmith Road. A quiet exit, not perhaps our finest hour. But we are grateful to you for the Liquorice Allsorts, and for the solicitude with which you issued to each man of us an Unemployment Insurance Card. That sorely perplexed a big landowner who was next to me in the queue. He hadn't supposed . . . But then, as we pointed out to him, he had not studied his Release Book. Otherwise he would have seen that, with the bluntness which has always characterised your Replies in Parliament, you had described our civil condition as "Relegated to Unemployment." Perhaps, Sir James, you meant us to remember that phrase on July 5th, when the Tory Party asks us to vote for no controls, a scramble for quick profits and another 1921 slump. Or did you?

AN ELECTION DIARY

JUNE is the ideal month for rural electioneering. In this fine weather the candidates have been going the rounds with their loudspeaker vans, stopping for half an hour here and there, talking to little groups of villagers, crawling along the narrow roads behind lurching hay-wains, admiring prize bulls, sampling last year's cider, chatting to old men who shook Mr. Gladstone's hand and worrying how they are to cover the whole constituency in the few days left before the poll. During the last week I've realised what a serious business the country folk make of a General Election. My own visits have been confined to the Home Counties, but I have been comparing notes with a friend who has been in search of Tory England across country to Bristol by way of Eton, Abingdon, Oxford, Bridgewater and Wells. This is Britain's Middle West, the rich farmland, the quiet villages of the Thames Valley and Somerset. Neither of us discovered any of the alleged "apathy." We've talked to candidates and their agents, hitch-hiking soldiers, shopkeepers, farmers, and workers in shadow factories. The people are packing the little village halls, crowding round speakers on their village greens, asking questions that show they have been doing some hard thinking since they last had an opportunity to vote.

* * *

The Beaverbrook stunts seem to have made very limited impression. Some people have never heard of them; others don't understand what they are all about. I heard of an area where someone had heard that some electors were worried about the Laski scare, but neither I nor my colleague got nearer to it than that. After any meeting, Tory, Liberal or Labour, the questions are about particular issues, with housing easily the most important. This is equally true in a small country town like Glastonbury as in the blitzed areas of Bristol. It is not merely a matter of new houses to make up wartime losses and arrears. Overcrowding was bad in many villages before the war. Now dilapidation and the absence of proper sanitary, water and electricity services have added to the resentment of returning soldiers and the newly-weds against rural housing conditions. No candidate can get away with glib promises about this. He is asked for detailed proposals: where he is going to get the necessary skilled labour and materials, what kind of houses he intends to provide, and how, precisely, he is going to pay for them. After housing come employment and "redundancy," pensions, agricultural policy and coal supplies. Some of the best candidates are men like Joe Burns, whom I watched at work in Gillingham; with no big meetings and "national" speakers to boost him he was quietly going about the constitutency explaining from a wide experience, both of industry and local government, the way in which the system worked and how common men could help to remedy it. Foreign affairs are rarely discussed. I heard only one question on foreign policy. Vernon Bartlett, unfortunately opposed by a Labour man, in Bridgewater, was the only candidate who was saying much about it. "But," said a postman, pointing to a poster showing Bartlett speaking into a telephone, "you must remember he's one of they newspaper blokes."

* * *

At short notice, and with many of its best people still away in the Army, Labour has built up a pretty good machine. Bristol is an outstanding example. There are five constituencies in Bristol, one of which is held by Cripps, the other four by Churchill men. A central Council of Labour has been set to co-ordinate the different branches of the movement, with its own research department. The election work has been departmentalised, each trade union being given responsibility for the appropriate part of the campaign; clerical workers have taken over the envelope addressing, printers the preparation and layout of publicity. The students have been drawn in—some engineering students, for instance, have a full time job looking after the loudspeaker vans. Labour may win at least four of Bristol's five seats. Nowhere was there any discrimination against Communists or Common Wealth people. On the contrary, the Labour agents were quite frank in praise of the Communists' energy and the way they have accepted Labour Party instructions, come forward with their own ideas and thrown in all their resources without attempting to make political capital for themselves. Some constituencies which have vainly tried to achieve a working unity of the Left have a different tale to tell; it seems to depend on local conditions and personalities.

* * *

Perhaps the most interesting example of "unity" is Aldershot, where Tom Wintringham has a straight fight against Oliver Lyttelton. Though he is standing as a Common Wealth candidate, Wintringham is supported by the local Liberals, Labourites and Communists. More than half of his indoor work is being done by soldiers. He told me that no canvassing is allowed in the military area, although there are many civilians living there, either soldiers' families, camp or N.A.A.F.I. employees. At one meeting, intending to discredit Common Wealth, Lyttelton started to read out a passage from Acland's manifesto. But when he stopped, there came calls of "Go on! Go on!" and he was forced to read out some more to the accompaniment of applause. Eventually he was allowed to stop because he'd come to the end of his extract. And this in one of the most Blue districts.

* * *

In the majority of constituencies there are at least three candidates. Take Slough, Reading, Oxford and Wells, for example. Should there have been a single anti-Tory candidate in each place? I should say yes; but the local Labour people put up a strong argument for running their man even where the main fight was between the Liberal and the Tory. In the towns like Reading, they seemed pretty sure that the Liberal would take two votes from the Tory for every one taken from Labour. Reading, in any case, has a very strong Labour candidate in Ian Mikardo, who moved the nationalisation resolution that the Labour Conference carried against the Executive last December. In the rural districts, the Labour people are taking very much the same line towards the Liberals as they did in the towns when the Party first broke away from the Liberals at the beginning of the century. They see Liberal candidates attacking public ownership and controls, complaining that State direction ends in the futility of bureaucracy, and refusing to say whether they will support a Labour or Tory minority Government if they hold the balance of power after the election. Labour supporters feel that, if they do the spadework in strongly entrenched Tory seats now, they stand a good chance of winning them next time. Often, they see very little difference between the Tory and Liberal candidates. The programme of the Liberals seems to vary greatly with the type of constituency. Labour men stick to their published policy, seem to be very happy about it and find surprisingly strong support in villages they never bothered to canvass before. I was frankly surprised, for instance, at the strength of Labour feeling in a village where I spoke at Sevenoaks, where John Pudney is standing for Labour. I was equally gratified at the swing to Labour in R. A. Butler's seat in Essex. How vast a change has occurred in rural areas I learned in the neighbouring constituency of Maldon where I spoke with Tom Driberg, who is a most popular M.P., to a vast crowd which filled the entire market square of what was once the sleepy little town of Braintree.

* * *

One small point that emerged in Somerset was a report from National Savings collectors that there had been a marked drop in savings since the announcement of the Election. Fears of Labour extravagance? Not altogether. Labour savers were afraid a Tory victory would be followed by inflation; Tory savers thought Labour would confiscate their nest eggs. But this was in the Somerset coal-field, where my friend met an old miner drawing out some of his savings. "Scared?" he said. "No," came the answer, "I had an accident four years ago. I've just got my compensation pension of two pounds a week through after all that time. Where's my nest-egg got to in all that time? Vote for Churchill? I'm a miner." Some old ladies may have been frightened by the "Savings" scare, but the gravest fear in the country is fear of unemployment.

* * *

I have yet to meet a single election worker who doesn't complain about the register. Apart from the usual sprinkling of babies and aliens who always squeeze into the best-conducted register, some people find they have been honoured by two votes while their neighbour has none. In one place, by a strange coincidence, many of the men found they had been omitted whilst their wives had been included. Elsewhere, there are gaps and removals which try the temper and feet of canvassers. The soldiers' vote in the rural constituencies is likely to be small. The Forces' register is seldom larger than two thousand and is often smaller, and perhaps only half of these proxies will actually vote. In Aldershot, where one would expect regular soldiers stationed in the permanent establishments there to have a vote, there seem to be a mere handful on the register. I sympathise with Bertrand Russell who wrote to *The Times* to say he had been given a vote to which he was not entitled: if he used it, "the register must be considered as authoritative and my vote valid, or, if my vote is invalid, the register is admitted to be not authoritative." I don't know what the answer to that may be. It certainly exposes the total inadequacy of a register that is disfranchising millions. But that is borne out every day by letters that reach this office, many of them from Service men who are furious at being deprived of their votes.

* * *

A Labour canvasser going his rounds in a London Borough was solemnly assured at one house that the occupants wished to support his man but that "the Government had told them to vote for the Conservative." The astonished canvasser asked what he meant. "Wait a bit," said the householder, "I'll fetch the order." He came back with the Tory election address. "Here you are," he said, pointing to the specimen ballot paper printed on the back, "it says put a cross against his name." This may be an extreme example, but it is true that many people think of the "Government" as something different from the Conservative Party. Talking politics with a group of soldiers the other day, I was told that it wasn't fair to criticise Mr. Churchill's foreign policy as foreign affairs were "the job of the Government!"

More remarkable still was the case of a lady who said she was going to change her vote this time. We had had enough of the Conservatives for whom she had always voted before. This time she would vote Tory!

* * *

It was in Abingdon, by the way, that two men came up to a friend of mine and said: "You're a journalist. Do you know whether any party makes its M.P.s clock in at the House of Commons? We aren't going to vote until we get a promise from one of the candidates that he turns up to work like the rest of us." In a village near Bristol, too, an old man walked up to the platform, shook hands with the Tory Member and said in a loud voice, "'Ow be 'e? Oi aint 'eard nothing of 'e since 'e was 'ere in 1935."

CRITIC

REPORT FROM PRAGUE

[By a Czech Correspondent]

Fifteen miles beyond Pilsen stands the last American sentry. After that, one drives through seven miles of no-man's land, rich rolling soil with white, red-tiled houses, fir and birch woods and fields with ripening crops. Full rich country of Bohemia, with dark-blue sky, white clouds and a scent of acacia drifting over the road. . Driving towards the demarcation line which cuts Bohemia into the American and Soviet zones, I thought of Pilsen, which I saw in the first days after the liberation. Little boys in their teens in captured German uniforms with red and white stripes and their German steel helmets, civilians with old-fashioned rifles proudly wearing ten or so cartridges in their belts. The damaged Skoda plant was guarded by the Factory Council; the workers, while showing me round, were wondering why their factory had been bombed by the Americans only fourteen days before victory—when it was anyway at a standstill for lack of raw material. The famous "Urquell" Brewery has been also destroyed by U.S. bombers and there was not much food in the city.

Between the towns of Rokycany and Holoubkov lies the seven-miles-wide belt of no-man's land, administered only by National Councils. The beginning of the Russian zone was marked by a slim birch pole guarded by two young Red Army men in sun-bleached uniforms; two horses were grazing on the meadow. There was one marked difference from the American zone: gone were the long columns of jeeps, trucks and lorries. If you looked around you saw neither the Russians nor their vehicles; they kept them on side roads, parked in the woods; the Red Army had obviously received orders to keep back. The most striking difference from the Americans was the absence of men in the thirties among the occupation troops. A Soviet Captain on the roadside, to whom I spoke, explained this: "There are not many left of my generation," he said sadly. "They lie at Stalingrad, at Sevastopol, on the Don."

A Czech, back in Prague after more than six years of friendly exile in Britain—how difficult it is to express one's emotions and observations in a few words. . . . Prague has grown and yet remained very much the same. The Germans wanted to build the city as the centre of their industry and rump administration. Passing through the well-known streets you will find Prague almost untouched. The Prague people complain of course that they have been three times bombed; but the old Londoner, even of Czech nationality, takes it with a smile. The Town Hall and several old houses have been burned during the fighting, but repair is possible.

Five days after the fighting was over, the town presented an astonishingly normal appearance. Electricity was on day and night, gas was almost normal, so were telephones and postal services. The majority of the tram lines were running, the barricades cleared, and on the terraces of coffee-houses the citizens of Prague were quietly drinking ersatz coffee with saccharine. One saw many of the pre-1938 uniforms worn by officers of Czechoslovakia's former army. General Svoboda (former C.-in-C. of Czechoslovak forces in the U.S.S.R.), now Minister of National Defence, ordered all officers wishing to serve in the new Czechoslovak army to bring a testimonial about their activities and whereabouts during the street-fighting in Prague.

It is significant that, while in other countries the Black Market got its highest impetus after the liberation, in Prague it was almost non-existent when I was there. Whether the end of the Black Market was due to patriotism or to the fact that no one knew how much the crown was worth is difficult to gauge; but whatever the explanation, the food supply, though pitiful, was quickly organised. The biggest shortage: cigarettes, black-market price 30 crowns each (approximate value 5*s.*); coffee, fats, soap and meat, follow suit.

Under the young Social-Democrat Laušman, Minister for Industry, all industries, transport, etc., have been provisionally taken over by Factory Councils—not for expropriation, but for protection against sabotage and in order to re-start them immediately under direction of National Councils, pending the untangling of property rights. Ownership or operation of all big enterprises was taken over during the Occupation by Germans or Quislings, and many smaller factories, shops and houses, especially Jewish-owned, have changed hands many times since 1939, with owners sometimes disappearing and with other people often making profit on them legally or illegally. Smaller establishments, snatched by Germans, the National Councils try to return to former owners, if they can be unearthed to set up title. But the temporary limit to individually owned means of production has been tentatively fixed at 5 million crowns—approximately £12,000 present value. As in France and Belgium, many Czech people of all classes, such as factory owners, business men, big farmers, have made money under the Germans which they are now scared of losing. The purge of Collaborationists, together with the fact that factories have been temporarily placed in the hands of Factory Councils, contributes to the growth of rumours of impending expropriation and the stories which are spreading into the American zone.

If you speak in liberated Czechoslovakia about the traditional German problem which is rousing so much discussion at this moment in Britain, people will look at you with blank faces. For them there is no such problem; it is not only the concentration camps or the cruelties of the Nazis, nor the S.S. and the Gestapo which have made Czechs so bitter, but the strutting, arrogant attitude of the average German while things were going their way. There was fruit—only for Germans; butter for Germans only; milk, cheese, potatoes, flour, bread, jam, Danish bacon, meat—just for Germans. People were evicted from their flats and houses with three hours' notice; the Germans moved in without being ashamed. There were special courts for Germans, Hitler Youth terrorised Czech children. While the going was good in 1940-41, there were very few Sudeten Germans who behaved in a decent way towards the ordinary Czechs; those are being spared. But the others—you can see endless processions of German civilians trekking with whatever they can carry to the frontiers of Czechoslovakia. Now the excitement of the first days has passed, people do not even look at them; but none have pity. As declared formerly by Dr. Benes, the democratic Germans, the number of whom is very small, will be permitted to stay in the country. Theirs, however, will be the position of a privileged group, not of a minority with statutory rights.

The political opinions expressed to me during the 12 days of my stay in Prague were extremely hazy. Few people have any clear conception of the world around them. Few, for instance, can appreciate the effort which was needed to defeat the Germans and, in a way, many are impressed by German "efficiency." None want to return to 1938: they do not want many political parties and some think that even four are too many and would prefer a two-party system like that in Slovakia (a Democratic and Communist Party only). What they want is freedom coupled with efficiency; this intense desire, together with an impatience common to all liberated countries and the complex economic problems of central Europe, is the great feature of Czechoslovakia to-day. The Czechs have managed to keep to an astonishing extent their national personality and, although sincerely grateful to the U.S.S.R., they desire also friendship with the great democracies of the West; especially is it visible in th many requests for British, French and America films, literature and music. While holding to th firm alliance with the U.S.S.R., they will kee their windows open to the West.

FACE VALUE

The National pundits dismiss with a jibe
  All arguments called theoretic,
The electoral method to which they subscribe
  Is purely and simply aesthetic.
Removed from the abstract political plane
  Which baffles the ignorant multitude,
The National Party conducts its campaign
  As a test of competitive pulchritude.

The faces of Labour the Tories parade
  To illustrate Left-Wing effrontery,
For dials that make the shareholders afraid
  Must vainly appeal to the country.
Comparing the looks of the Left and the Righ
  In contrast to Labour's Rogues' Gallery,
The Conservative phiz of the humblest Knight
  Resembles the knighthood of Malory.

But features that mirror the National soul
  With noblest Conservative constancy,
Displayed to electors, induce on the whole
  Far deeper alarm and despondency.
They only appear to the National fan
  To be hall-marked with true moral grandeu
The National all-Party caretaker's pan
  Is notably lacking in candour.

The Tory exhibits bring strongly to mind
  Prizewinners in pen and in paddock,
With profiles of ruminants strangely combined
  With the eye of the cod or the haddock.
So hangdog their manner, so furtive their looks
  They are hardly a public attraction
But more like a gaggle of gentlemen crooks
  Caught out in a fishy transaction.

And if the plain truth should be told, as it mus
  By the standards of pure physiognomy,
What voter these mugs with a sixpence woul
    treat,
  Far less with the nation's economy?
The Tories' assurance is therefore misplaced,
  Their confidence unjustifiable,
For National samples look so double-faced,
  While Labour looks plain, but reliable.

Sagittarius

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this colum goes to Mrs. Nicholas.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of pap and give details of origin. Address to THI ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

For my part, I intend to write across my ball paper the words, "God save the King," a nothing else. If a million voters did this, the mor effect would be profound. If two million d so, it would amount to a silent revolution.—Letter *Catholic Herald.*

Because it has been ascertained that her broth is a conscientious objector, Miss Elsie Sutto 18-years-old typist at a Potteries factory, of Scra Street, Packmoor, Stoke-on-Trent, has been refus the role of the "Spirit of Freedom" in a Bursle factory pageant, for which she was chosen a fo night ago.—*Daily Mail.*

Docking, Norfolk, Rural Council, have agre to a petition by people living in Hell's Row, Sou Creake, to rename the district "Churchill Estate." *Evening Standard.*

The body normally gets rid of moisture a heat through the lungs. During a long spee more hot air than usual will find its way o Doctor's hints to speakers.—*Evening Standard.*

HEALTH ON THE FARM

"Our dairy herds," said Lord Listowel in a recent debate in the House of Lords, " are riddled with disease, lamentable as the admission may be. Appalling damage has already been done to the health and efficiency of thousands of people mainly in the rising generation." His lordship subsequently modified his remarks, taking the familiar line of blaming the press and the B.B.C. for repeating, quite accurately, this sensational statement. But it should not require a House of Lords debate to elicit the fact that all is not well with our dairy herds. If all the animals in them were submitted to the usual tuberculin test, it is probably true that not less than 40 per cent. would react unfavourably.

Probably only one in a hundred of those reactors is giving tubercular milk. Still, there are cows, and too many of them, adding their quota of tubercular infection to our milk supply, and it would be folly to pretend that there is the faintest sign of any improvement in the situation, despite all the research of the last quarter of a century. Apart from tuberculosis, four other diseases, namely mastitis, contagious abortion, sterility and Johne's disease, are estimated by veterinary experts to be robbing us of 200,000,000 gallons of milk annually, representing £20,000,000 annual loss to dairy farmers. The average life of a healthy dairy cow should be at least eight lactations. In practice it is more like two or three lactations. It is difficult to believe that the health of the human population does not suffer by depending on the product of animals that show such little capacity to be healthy or even to live.

It is easy to blame the agricultural industry for this. But I venture to suggest that the fundamental blame should be laid on other doorsteps. In the first place the nation can blame itself for its consistent neglect of agriculture for the best part of a hundred years. For lack of any incentive to capital investment, our farm buildings are largely out of date and unfit for hygienic milk production. For lack of a fair peacetime reward, milk producers have lived from hand to mouth under the perpetual shadow of bankruptcy. They have barely been encouraged to exist, let alone to expend money, thought and effort on improving the quality of the milk supply. We have neglected the land, and this is one of the ways in which we are paying the penalty.

What practical steps can we take now to improve matters? There is quite a lot that can be done, without waiting for a change of heart in what we call our civilisation. In the first place we must see to it that our farms are re-equipped for clean, economical milk production, and realise that air and light and easily washed surroundings are more important in the cowshed than glazed tiling and chromium plate in the milk-distributing combine's offices. We must have properly equipped farms, whether the State or private enterprise equips them ; it is a question of which will do it the more cheaply and effectively. Included in this equipment is the provision of adequate water supplies, lack of which is no small cause of soured and dirty milk. Secondly, more thought must be given to the education and encouragement of the milk producer himself. By observing four simple rules (clean hands, clean udders, clean utensils and rejection of the fore-jet of milk) clean milk *can* be produced in remarkably unpromising surroundings. It is time, too, that milk was bought and sold on quality, and the producer financially encouraged to produce quality milk, while severely discouraged from producing dirty, diseased milk. Yet, apart from the negative information conveyed by such terms as " T.T.", no standards of quality in milk exist, nor could anyone say with authority what they should be.

By a judicious mixing of material encouragement with education, the producers could be led to take a better view of their responsibilities to the community for their product. And there is no reason why the small farm should not produce as good results as the large concern—indeed, the greater opportunities for personal supervision give the small farm advantages in this respect, provided it is properly equipped. But the material encouragement must be there, for milk production is the most exacting of all the branches of farming.

Then there is the question of the animals themselves. I have already indicated that there is one direction where research is badly needed. But what of the production and rearing of the cow who will give the milk? The Ministry of Agriculture has, quite rightly, been taking steps to improve the standard of dairy bulls. They are meeting with success in a campaign to bring into the herd more bulls with milk in their ancestry, and this is bound to prove effective in raising our too low average production of about 500 gallons per cow. For the best-looking dairy bull in the world may, in practice, have only a lowering effect on the milk production of the herd if he is not of a good milking strain. But let us not, in our enthusiasm, go to the other extreme and ignore looks. The dairy cow has to stand up to an enormous strain. The production of 1,000 gallons of milk in a year means the production of about six times her own weight of milk in that time, and she must be of the constitution and conformation to withstand this without breaking down. So do let us remember that it is quite important to breed cows that will live, as well as cows that will give plenty of milk. I believe myself that the day will come when we shall not think overmuch about 1,500-gallon cows, but aim rather at a herd where no cow averages less than, say, 750 gallons, and none is forced to give more than 1,000 ; but most will live out their eight lactations.

On the scientific side it is urgent that the number of veterinary surgeons be increased. Double the present number could comfortably be employed if our flocks and herds are to be properly supervised and the " panel " system that the Ministry has instituted (with regular visits from the vet. for an all-in charge) be made general. Here indeed is a fruitful means for practical education for those in need of it, and an opportunity to prevent disease before it becomes thoroughly entrenched on a farm. Certain abuses must be ended by legislation. It is indefensible, for example, that a farmer, cleaning up his herd, may legitimately send to market for sale rejected animals that he knows to be diseased. No one thinks this more outrageous than the farmers themselves ; but with official acquiescence for this procedure, and no compensation for those who take a conscientious view of their responsibilities, the practice naturally continues.

I wish I could lay my hand on my heart and say that I believed those responsible for the health of our livestock were alive, vigorous and open-minded in their approach to preventing animal disease. They are hard-working and conscientious. But the more I come in contact with them and their work, the more I find something acquiescent, even to the point of complacency, in their attitude. There are certain well-worn lines of tackling certain problems ; they take great pains to apply them. But when, as is happening, the lines they follow seem to bear remarkably little fruit, there does not appear to be any inclination to try something quite different and new. When a farmer in Kent claims to have found a means of ridding his herd of tuberculosis and keeping them free from it, and his herd passes regularly the highest official tests ; when other farmers, trying his methods, endorse his findings ; when this is brought to the notice of the authorities on many occasions, both in Parliament and in the press, and a scientific investigation demanded—when this has happened and the authority concerned has not only refused an enquiry but would not even bother to ascertain what the treatment was, then I feel reasonably certain that official veterinary research has got into a rut and is content to stay there.

In the end we come back to the beginning. Health on our farms is a public responsibility. If as a nation we accept it and are determined that we cannot suffer this drain upon our own health and the loss both of happiness and money that it involves, then there is reason to hope that we can make great advances in banishing it, even as we have made such advances in turning our cities into more hygienic places for living.

L. F. Easterbrook

IN THE RUE DES BONBONS

When this unit took over the *Café du Duc* in the Rue des Bonbons, painted eyebrows were raised and the monumental Brussels hats nodded up and down the street with the news.

The girls had left that morning, and the anguished proprietor, stopping only to remove the carpet from the bar, had immediately put in train the arrangements for the opening of another similar place of business and adventure. By evening, we were installed in the airless rooms, Private Wall fixing me up with some jocularity and much coarseness in a de luxe cubbyhole with private bath and other interesting plumbing fixtures, with a bed one foot from the floor, and with indirect and seductive lighting.

The Town Major's choice of a billet had been made easy by the decision of the food authorities to shut down an establishment that catered too well for its after-dark clientèle. They said in the Rue des Bonbons that they were pleased to see the military, for the street had lost some of its reputation by the presence of the Café du Duc. In the Paysanne, next door, they said that the Bosche made scenes in the street at all hours. The Negro waiter at the Esquire told me that he was happy to welcome me as the new proprietor of the place, and could offer a real *Martini sec* at only twenty-five francs if I could in turn accommodate him with soap.

There are, be it understood, obligations in such a charge as the Duc. It now takes me half an hour to walk down the Rue des Bonbons. We live in such close proximity to each other that you don't walk down one side or the other of the street. In the middle of the cobbles, you are in hand-shaking reach of the shops on either side.

We started work there the next morning. The bar was the main office and we accommodated the staff at little round tables, sitting on blue baize *banquettes*, two by two. Each pair was divided from the other by a wooden partition, for in the good days of the Duc it was not always wise to let your neighbour see just when you were holding the lady's hand at supper. I made the bar itself my desk.

The *boîtes* and clubs of the Rue des Bonbons are luxurious. We realised how shabby we had ourselves become ; where else would there be such mirrored bars, such new brocades, such filmy curtains looped across tiny windows?

Perhaps it is four years of occupation that have made these people so well suited to crowded conditions. For in this capital you discuss the weather as if it were the plan to blow up the Parliament. With many a backward glance, you are always close to your conspirator in conversation ; you are jammed up tight against him in the tiny bars ; you are cheek to cheek with the black market in the Ambassadors and in imminent danger of being savaged by a fancy hat in the Plaisanterie (fifth down the street on the left).

It is certainly not due to fear of the consequences of the black traffic that makes every man and woman whisper and confide. The beefsteaks are blatant ; Naafi cigarettes are freely offered ; and across the bar of the Paysanne there is a lively argument on the most taboo of all subjects—the price of pound notes. And consider, for instance, the case of my respected friend who prints champagne bottle labels. You might say that in these days he is in the doldrums, an idle man. "But reconsider," he says almost petulantly. "First I printed the labels with the maker's name only. Then I printed the labels with the addition of "Reserved for the Wehrmacht." Then I

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printed the labels with 'Reserved for the U.S. Army.' And now think of it. It would not be right, my friend, for a patriot of this city to treat his little friend to a bottle so marked. So now I print labels with the maker's name only, to be stuck over all the labels on the bottle, so that the little friend need never know of the convoys of champagne, duly guarded, that are now on the roads of the Continent. . . ."

But I would not like to paint the Rue des Bonbons only in the colour of the black market. That first week we were there, we found how many had looked at the street always through rose-coloured spectacles. Up to four o'clock in the morning there would be violent hammering at the closed door of the Café du Duc, and Private Wall would lean out of the window and say in his best French that it was fermay and militaire. Up till midnight, when we closed the door, the visitors would make their way in and ask for the *patron* with some astonishment. The ladies who knew the place in its hey-day (and sometimes, it must be said, in their own) would hesitate to believe it when introduced to me as that worthy. One frail citizeness was frankly critical and disbelieving when I offered the bottle of Maggi as the only refreshment in the place for the solace of herself and her P.F.C. escort.

"The place used to be so elegant," she said rudely. "And now look at it—full of soldiers."

"Madame," I said with dignity. "It may interest you to know that before we consented to sleep here we had the entire establishment dusted with insect powder."

The poundings at the door at night have ceased now, but there have been other visitors. There was the man who wanted payment for the elegant light fittings, and the plumber, equally morose. To these I have given the name of my Brigadier, who has never been in these parts, and perhaps never before has been asked to foot a bill for neon lighting (in blue) stating that dancing, suppers, and attractions are within. But this is war.

Come to think of it, the Negro waiter is probably the most helpful man in the street. It is he who has settled my telephone arrangements at the little box of a cinema opposite the Esquire; the lovely blonde who takes the money in the cash box dials for me, and I take the money when a customer comes. The Negro said: "You may with safety go into the box with her; *elle n'est pas méchante.*" (She wears earrings that are white porcelain flowers, and I have seen others with officers' pips on their ears.)

Another service he did was to arrange for our laundry. We provided the soap, and the wife of a cook came to collect it and take it it to a friend's house where there was a little hot water. The waiter then rigged up a line across the backyards of several clubs and bars, and my underclothes were thus suspended from the neon light of the Plaisanterie and a de luxe bedroom of Le Duc. Other services have been the sale of an officer's bicycle (2,500 francs a tyre), the loan of a thousand francs when the Field Cashier became quite adamant, and some delicate negotiations about half a bottle of Cointreau in which I had no part.

I could wish that all were as helpful. Certainly the maître d'hôtel of the Miami played me false. On a preliminary reconnaissance I had averred how much we wished to eat his thick steaks, how greatly we admired his dance floor, all six feet of it, how tragic it was that we had a hundred francs till the end of the month, and thus could never sit down to eat in his elegant surroundings.

The bargain was struck at £3 per head for *hors-d'oeuvre,* steak and a glass of wine. The matter appeared to be sealed and settled. And when the girls were at table, when he had the suckers where he wanted them, this saboteur blandly inquired: "And what would the gentlemen like to order? I suggest oysters, soup, fish, steak and some delicious ices?"

We have worked hard in the Rue des Bonbons. The typewriters have clattered till four in the morning, and we have left the place cleaner than it was, albeit still a little smelling of insect powder. We have certainly broken a few things, such as the bannisters down that tortuous staircase, and some ornaments of reclining maidens, and a table or two. But we have, I hope, kept up the tone of the street, and justified the optimism of the other club manageresses when they welcomed the military.

Some day I shall go back to the Rue des Bonbons, at a time when you won't need an after-dinner curfew pass, and need not slide out of the Plaisanterie by a side-door after half-past ten. And then I shall go to the Café du Duc, lean against the bar, and say: "I remember when I ran this joint. . . ."

VERNON BLAIR

THOUGHTS AT THE V. AND A.

THE Victoria and Albert Museum is a building not only distressing to the eye but signally ill-suited to its functions. The arrangement, moreover, of its contents, while in no sense a public disgrace (as is the arrangement at the British Museum of the exhibits from Africa and Oceania), has hitherto been calculated to edify the expert rather than to attract the novice or to delight the aesthete. It did not include even the most obvious necessity in such a museum—a series of furnished rooms displaying the development of English applied art from its beginnings to the present day, including late Victorian and Edwardian interiors. Such a series exists in the Paris Museum of Decorative Arts, and very fascinating it is; but when French visitors enquired for its English equivalent, one had to confess shamefacedly that it did not exist. For this reason a specially enthusiastic welcome must be given to the exhibition with which the Victoria and Albert has inaugurated the return of its treasures. The new Director, it appears, genuinely wishes to overcome the obstacles provided by an inept architect, and to make the museum fulfil its neglected function. A series of well lighted and elegantly arranged show-cases provide in miniature a history of English decorative art from before the Conquest till the reign of James I. Ivories and enamels, needlework and jewellery, no longer languish in sterile segregation, but, standing side by side, recover some of their significance and redouble our pleasure. (I saw a child hardly less entranced by the exhibition than I was myself.) If this promising policy is continued, the Victoria and Albert will become a source of pride to London. For its contents are far richer and more beautiful than is usually recognised. A second room in the present exhibition is devoted to an anthology of the smaller treasures—Byzantine, Romanesque, Gothic and Renaissance, from the chief countries in Europe—miracles of taste, of craftsmanship and, often, of imagination.

The notion that a museum should present works of art as if they were fossils is based, I suggest, upon a confusion of thought. Just as the function of a locomotive is to transport, the function of an ornament is to adorn. (Unluckily museum directors cannot provide beautiful women to wear jewels or to flutter fans!) And since a decorative object cannot be fully understood unless its power to decorate is apparent, it is rigorously unscientific to place it with hundreds of similar objects with which it was never intended to be associated. On the other hand a high proportion of the contents of such a museum as the Victoria and Albert are of small interest except to connoisseurs. The obvious policy surely is to divide the museum into two parts. In one, the finest things can be so displayed as to emphasise as far as possible their decorative value—a result to be obtained in most cases only by bringing together objects belonging to different categories, e.g., by setting china upon furniture, by placing tapestry or velvets behind statuary, and by fully furnished period rooms. In the other section the less important objects can be so arranged as to assist the expert in his comparative researches.

The British Museum, as I have already hinted, demands rearrangement even more urgently than the Victoria and Albert. Or rather a new museum is required in which many of the objects now crowded hugger-mugger as if in some Balzacian antique shop could be for the first time made visible and enjoyable. (Incidentally the present overlapping in function of the various museums is irrational and most unfortunate. It has led even to the directors wasting their exiguous funds in bidding against one another at auctions.) In the past our museums have been too often treated as preserves: there is one, which I have not mentioned, where one almost expected to see a sign "Trespassers will be prosecuted." But there is no real opposition of interest, I believe, between the art-lover and the student. A wise, tasteful and energetic director can satisfy both.

ROGER MARVELL

RADIO NOTES

Serials. With *Doctor Thorne* pleasantly "meandering level with its fount," it is worth considering (for future reference) what makes a good serial. There have been complaints that the actors in this particular case do not speak in mid-Victorian tones. To achieve this effect without risking burlesque would be very difficult nowadays, and on the whole it seems to me as if producer Howard Rose had taken more pains with the actual style here than he sometimes does. It would be too much to expect that the speech should be entirely realistic: the ladies in particular (with the exception of Miss Barbara Couper) sound a bit effortful when they are alone together; but the general effect is sustained—this is the point—and succeeds, Sunday after Sunday, in recapturing the thread. Trollope's novels—and on the whole almost any of the big, sprawling masterpieces of nineteenth century literature—serialise well because the plots are desultory, episodic, complicated—like houses which have had wings added to them at different periods; because they depend more on character than on atmosphere; and because they touch life at so many points, deal with it at so many levels. Character, humour, incident, and just enough drama to give each episode relief and the whole a satisfying shape: these are the requirements of a good serial play. To attempt to treat Hardy or Conrad, or even Sheridan Le Fanu, in this way could only lead to disaster, because these artists depend for their effect on submerging us in a particular atmosphere. Not *Tess*, then, but *Harry Richmond*, *Beauchamp's Career*, *Richard Feverel;* not *Nostromo* or *Victory*, but *Middlemarch* and *The Mill on the Floss;* not *Uncle Silas*, but *North and South;* not *The Possessed*, but *Les Chouans*, *Les Illusions Perdues*. And when at long last we get our third wave-length programme, still more fascinating possibilities present themselves: Stendhal's *La Chartreuse de Parme*, for instance, or one of Henry James's larger machines.

The Road to Naseby. Good, straightforward entertainment, well cast and acted. Insufficiently imaginative for the length. Too many battle scenes which sounded all alike. Not always clear who was speaking. For most reasons I dread the return of television—at any rate to begin with; but it ought to improve the chances of features like this, which, when invisible, tend to be dull and monotonous.

Henry IV. Some slight improvement since the first episode, but not enough to redeem this production from a general charge of carelessness. Excellent in conception, it unaccountably foundered on the inability of a good cast to rise to their proper level. Fluffs, sibilance, inaudibility, gabbling, feeble characterisation, lack of shape: better no Shakespeare at all than Shakespeare performed like this.

Text and Context: A. E. Housman. An interesting, provocative programme. Personally I remain unconvinced that Housman was really a tender, kind-hearted poet. Perhaps I misunderstood Professor Garrod's argument; but the examples (beautifully read by Felix Aylmer) were surely not very characteristic. A desire to defend Housman from some of the attacks made in recent years upon his view of life, may be natural; but I doubt if this can be successfully done by ignoring the evidence. However, a well-sustained paradox is always worth listening to, because it probably contains an important germ of truth.

How to be Good at Music. Extremely amusing, as usual; sometimes delightfully malicious; but I thought there was almost too much material, and certainly a great many of the sequences left one in the air. Judged by the highest standard—as Stephen Potter and Joyce Grenfell deserve to be—this latest collaboration of theirs did not add up to enough. But Celia Johnson day-dreaming through a performance of Bax's *Tintagel* hit a very big nail on the head.

P.S.—I wonder why the waltz from Tcherepnin's *Le Pavillon d'Armide*, which was admirably given by the Theatre Orchestra on the 21st, is not constantly played. It could, I believe, become as popular with the general public as any of Tchaikovsky's famous waltzes: it has all the ingredients. Will not one of the gramophone companies oblige with a recording?

RECOMMENDATIONS.—*July 1st*. "Search for Flowers" (Talk by Andrew Young, 9.15); Seventeenth Century Music (10.30).

July 2nd. Dvorak Third Symphony (G.F.P. 5.50); *Squirrel's Cage* (Play by Tyrone Guthrie, 9.30).

July 3rd. New Poems (10.40).

July 4th. Symphony Concert (Walton Viola Concerto, 7.45).

July 5th. "War in the Pacific," 1 (8.0).

July 6th. "Edmund Kean" (8.0); Mozart Coronation Concerto (Phyllis Sellick, 10.0).

July 7th. Symphony Concert (2.30); Beethoven Violin Concerto (Menuhin G.F.P., 8.0).

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

THE MOVIES

"Lermontov," at the Tatler
"They Met in Moscow" and "Our Country," at the Academy
"National Velvet," at the Empire
"I'll be Seeing You," at the Odeon
"The Great Flamarion," at the Dominion and the New Victoria

More than once the Russians have shown themselves masters of the screen biography. Gorky, at the Tatler, gives way to *Lermontov;* and a great deal more than national piety has gone to the making of this film. Imagine what Denham or Hollywood would make of such a theme—of Byron, for example: there are rumours, alas! that one or other has him in hand. Poetry, I'm afraid, like science, may have its innings yet, with Milton surrounded by Technicolor angels, Housman in love, Keats always hungry for porridge, and Shelley sent down for kissing the Master's daughter. One assumes, in a democracy whose tastes are dictated by the penny newspaper, that this will be the level. The wicked Russians, of course, have no such liberty. Even in their earlier days, when they didn't hesitate to distort history in the name of Social Realism, I preferred their kind of falsification to that practised by the heart-beat school. Better lying for a purpose, than vulgarity without one. Whatever the reason, national or political, *Lermontov* treats its subject with the respect and imagination it deserves. No one who has responded to Lermontov (even though it be only in translation) could fail to be delighted by this film, and the casual visitor will find it ten times more thrilling than lives of Edison or Reuter.

So far as truthfulness goes, there has been some slight simplification of the pivotal character, that's all. Lermontov was indeed an enemy of society, but for more various and subtle reasons than are outlined here. He would have scorned any society, most of all, perhaps, that of a Communist State, in which it is doubtful whether he would have survived as long as twenty-seven years. Exile to the Caucasus revived in him the passion of childhood; his death (from duelling) was the climax of a protracted suicide. He wasn't in any sense "hounded down" by others. The complex ironies of this romantic life, so ruthlessly and exquisitely portrayed in *A Hero of Our Time*, have of necessity been somewhat whittled down on the

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screen; the lameness, for example—precious hallmark—has been let go; the flame is there, but it burns white instead of black.

I am not complaining of this film portrayal, which is as notable in its way as *Suvorov* and more accurate. It is art of a high kind that has given us Pushkin's death (with which the film opens) and the Court balls; the journey to the Caucasus, the drinking bouts, the heroics of mess-room and battlefield; the single unhappy love affair (but we aren't shown how Lermontov played the deuce with others' happiness); the marksmanship that could have carried him through further duels if he had wished. The scene of that final duel, on a high field in the mountains, with the rooks flying off and the tethered horses jibbing, is splendidly realised. Lermontov snaps his opponent's rapier; they face one another with pistols, and he waits while he is shot through the heart. It may be thought that the lightning and the bursting storm have been piled on, but they are true to fact. Director, Albert Gendelstein.

Russian musical at the Academy. She is a champion pig-breeder in the North, he beats all records with his flocks in the South. They meet at the Moscow Exhibition. Crude, enjoyable, with a native tang of music and landscape. *Our Country* (John Eldridge) is as distinctively English: documentary of a returned sailor enjoying England in wartime, coastline and coal pit, hills and rivers and canteens, beautifully photographed by Jo Jago.

National Velvet. The novel was far more alive, but given the glycerine coating this is a rather winning film, with some relation to the original and a horse-race that for once excites. *I'll Be Seeing You* and *The Great Flamarion* are unexciting, the first with Ginger Rogers let out of prison for Christmas, the second with Stroheim as a Vaudeville crack shot whose bullets "caress" his stage partner. I have a fondness for both of them, but especially not this time.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

Correspondence

THE SERVICE VOTER

SIR,—Of the ten officers in this Mess who completed A.F. B2626 (Service declaration) in May, 1944, and recently applied for postal voting forms, three so far have received a printed postcard from their respective Electoral Registration Officers saying that their Service declarations have not been received, and they are not therefore eligible for inclusion in the Service Register.

Though in each case the non-arrival of the declaration may have been due to some quite unavoidable cause, e.g., loss of mail in transit, the consequent disfranchisement of the individual concerned is none the less effective, and through no fault of their own they will be unable to vote.

The following facts seem to be significant:—

1. At no time, to the best of my knowledge, has any member of the Forces received any acknowledgement of the receipt of his original "Service declaration." Consequently, *no* Serviceman, especially if he is serving overseas, can be sure whether or not he will be able to vote until either

(*a*) He receives his postal ballot form, or

(*b*) He receives a card from his Electoral Registration Officer, informing him that he is *not* on the Register.

2. In the latter case, the postcard recommends the unfortunate recipient to complete another A.F. B2626—but adds a note to the effect that, unless the Service declaration was received by March 15th, 1945, he will be ineligible to vote at a General Election *before October 1st*, 1945.

In other words, citizens who have been allowed to believe, up till early June, that they would be able to vote in this Election, will not be able to do so, however promptly they complete their second declaration.

3. The postcards referred to above appear to have been printed in May, 1945.

The interpretation seems to be that, until that date, preparations for the Services voting arrangements were based on the assumption that the General Election would not be held before October.

If those who were responsible for the selection of July as the time for the General Election were aware of the conditions outlined above—and it is difficult to believe that they were not—the choice of date appears to amount to a deliberate disregard of the rights of citizens in the Forces.

The whole procedure has—rightly or wrongly—raised a very strong suspicion that the Conservative Party has reason to fear the influence of the Forces' vote on the result of the Election; and indeed their own tactics in the choice of date have already done much to justify this apprehension!

CAPTAIN, R.A.

POLITICS IN THE FORCES

SIR,—An engaging young civilian visited my unit recently to deliver a lecture on the purpose and functions of democracy. He came, he explained, not as the nominee of any political party. Oh, no! He was an historian, selected by the Combined Universities Board at the invitation of the Air Ministry, to tour C.M.F. He was free and independent, however, and could say just what he liked.

What did he say? That there was really nothing much wrong with authoritarianism as such, except that it tended towards a policy of aggression.

That strikes in wartime were nothing less than sabotage, for, "after all, the Government handed over the whole show to the workers and gave them a free hand to run their industries as they liked." (Why, he himself had had to go for days on end without coal, the miners having gone on strike *just because* they wanted an extra holiday. And it was jolly cold in Glasgow!)

That many of our liberties were being submerged in a spate of bureaucracy—witness, for example, the Shop Hours Acts which denied him his right as an individual to buy a packet of cigarettes whenever he wanted one. . . .

No, he told me later over lunch, there was no possibility of sending out from England lecturers to present straight party politics to the troops. He would admit that many people thought him a bit of a Tory, but, as he had said, he had spoken purely as an historian.

I note that D. N. Pritt's proposal to allow the armed forces to take an active part in politics, out of working hours, during the General Election, was thrown out by the House.

Our lecture, having, of course, nothing whatever to do with party politics, took place during working hours.

C.M.F. FLYING OFFICER

GREEK AFTERMATH

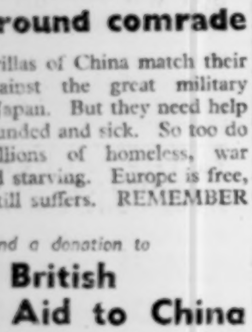
SIR,—Having read "The Greek Aftermath" in your last issue, I venture to send you the following extracts from letters from my husband, who has been with the Army in Greece for the last six months doing work necessitating much intercourse with civilians in varying districts.

(May 30, 1945.)

"This is another indignant letter, but it is the indignation of every soldier out here and I'd like it to get into an English newspaper. Overwhelmingly the relief goods sent here and given free to the Greek Government for distribution end up on the Black Market. In my district, sugar has been distributed at under 3½ oz. per head for a fortnight, yet unlimited American sugar could be bought on the Black Market for the equivalent of 18*s*. 10*d*. a pound.

"Outside Athens, no one has seen any soap, and British troops until recently have had to content themselves with laundry soap, yet all the best brands of British and American toilet soaps are openly for sale in Athens at about 10*s*. a bar. These examples could be multiplied indefinitely.

"The whole trouble is lack of supervision by



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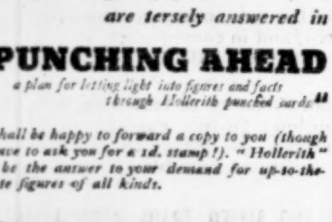
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To Hazlitt, you remember, the wives of most poets of his acquaintance appeared as mere pieces of furniture. Poets now should count themselves lucky in this respect, for we at Heal's have been able to make precious little of any other furniture for them since the war began. To those of sense and sensibility, less fortunate in their household possessions, we recommend an inspection of our well-chosen collection of antiques — fine furniture of Hazlitt's period and before.

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.R.R.A. of the Greek authorities, who are tho ghly corrupt. The shopkeepers sell Red Cross cels and U.N.R.R.A. goods openly at exorbitant es, but the police don't interfere, except perhaps ollect a free pound of butter now and then. The ish Army has no power to interfere in Greek irs, in spite of the fact that the present Government been put in power by it, at a sacrifice of British s. One rather interesting point I forgot; you get Black Market penicillin injections at 8 gold nds (about £100 paper) a shot. No civilians in gland get it."

ne 10, 1945.)

"They (the Greeks) have made up their minds that are going to fight Russia solely in order that Greece y annex half Bulgaria to make her self-supporting wheat, though they admit that it contains very few eeks. One of their grievances against E.A.M. is t it won't support these claims. In Athens I saw ap in a shop window of what the Nationalists want. fantastic; most of Albania, the southern half of bia, more than half Bulgaria, including Philippolis, Varna and the suburbs of Sofia, part of thern Turkey, the Dodecanese, Cyprus and Sicily. ey know they haven't the slightest chance, but they pe to get support from ignorant people and to still demand for social reform.

"There's a paper in Athens, *Elliniki Aima* (Greek ood), which goes in for all the German mystic ialism and is connected with a movement which fore the war used to run pagan festivals at Delphi . There are atrocities in this country as bad, ough on a smaller scale, as anything in German ncentration camps. I can't give you chapter and se as we have been told to hush it up, God knows y. No wonder they think we are hypocrites. urchill is determined to put the king back, no tter what suffering it causes. Meanwhile election eparations are going on. Royalists are having their ceased great-grandfathers enfranchised, and E.A.M. en are being put away in prison or called up into e Army.

"For the past six weeks there has been terrific flation, prices almost trebling. . . .

"I'm afraid my letters are rather like extracts from e NEW STATESMAN these days, but I see so much what is going on in my job, and it makes me so ad, that I just have to let off steam." B. I. K.

LABOUR AND ARMS

SIR,—In view of the many misleading statements on e Labour Party's policy on Armaments prior to the ar I wish to draw your attention to the following otation from "The History of the Air Ministry," C. G. Grey (pub. 1940).

"There is interest in noting that under the Labour Government nothing was done to hamper the rebuilding of the R.A.F. When we remember the avowed pacifism of the Labour Party and the cry of all Parties that the War 1914–18 was a war to end war, the foresight of the Labour Government in allowing the Air Force to expand reasonably in view of the bad times financially, deserves to be noticed." D. J. THOMAS

Mayor's Parlour, Hounslow.

TORY THREAT

SIR,—Mr. Churchill in his third election broadcast is reported by the *Daily Telegraph* to have said:—"Do not let it be put about that . . . I would ever associate myself with plans to impose the yoke of Socialism upon the necks of the free British people.

"Such an attempt would lead us into a period of disorder and party strife, and of Parlimentary eclipse, such as had never been seen in the . . . history of our country."

I wish to draw your attention to the second paragraph. Mr. Churchill suggests that if the Labour Party came to power "disorder and party strife . . . such as had never been seen in the history of our country" would ensue!

Such "disorder and party strife" would obviously be initiated by the *opposition* as a protest against the policy of the party in power—in other words, in the case under discussion, by the Conservatives.

No one is foolish enough to suggest that the party in power, whichever it was, would itself embark on such suicidal action. Labour has submitted, without resorting to the violent methods implied by Mr. Churchill, for 25 years to a Conservative majority. Are the Conservatives considering resistance, beyond parliamentary debate, to a Labour Government should it be elected? Is Mr. Churchill, in effect, holding a pistol to the head of the "free British people"?

HENRY MASON

FRANCE, BRITAIN AND SYRIA

SIR,—The policy of ousting the French from Syria is not novel but classic. A policy calculated to produce precisely the same result was pursued by the British Military Administration during the period 1918–1920. In pursuance of this policy Syrian notables who desired a French administration in Syria were arrested, bullied, and humiliated, sometimes by the Arabs with the acquiescence of the British, and sometimes directly by the British. When, moreover, the Damascus Arabs were imprudent enough to allow a staff plan of operations dated the 2nd September, 1919, for an offensive by the Arab army against the French to fall into the hands of the French Intelligence, the author, Yassim Pacha, so far from being arrested, court-martialled and sentenced, was merely summoned to Cairo and subjected to a wigging. It was generally understood at the time that the money and arms with which Feisul, the leader of the Shereffean Arabs, was so liberally supplied emanated from British G.H.Q., and the French *locus classicus* on the subject, "La France en Syrie" (Comte R. de Gontaut Bikon: Plon: Paris, 1923), even alleges the landing by night at Beirut by the British of a consignment of arms for Feisul. It was in any event his not unreasonable confidence in sympathy in British military quarters that prompted Feisul's *coup d'état* in March, 1920, when he proclaimed himself King of an independent Syria and thus threw down the gauntlet to the French. In the result the Anglo-Arab combination failed at the last minute. Feisul was quickly ejected by General Gouraud (and given a kingship in Iraq as a consolation prize) and the chief anti-French or reputedly anti-French officers in the British Army transferred elsewhere.

The stage was thus well set for a second attempt, 25 years later, in a somewhat similar set-up but under far more favourable conditions. It is true that this time as the result of the arrangement with General Catroux after the reconquest of the country, Syria was to be "independent" and enter into an alliance with France. The real function of alliance (which under modern conditions implies the right of the foreign ally to maintain forces and occupy bases) was to protect the considerable French cultural, economic and political interests. But the prospects for the alliance look pretty dismal after the apparent success of the recent coup. It is nevertheless doubtful whether, even from the coldest angle of good Imperialist business, it is sound policy to jockey the French out of Syria. (Our French allies, though temporarily weakened, are not the right people to double-cross, and even the Blimps are getting rattled at the idea that France might refuse to participate in an anti-Russian Western *bloc!*) But this pretty *tour de force* of Albionic diplomacy is by no means the end of the story. The Arab League (that successful promotion of the Cairo Residency) may well start proffering its services to the French in order to assist the orderly administration both of the French Protectorates of Morocco and Tunisia, and even of Algeria which is integrated in Metropolitan France. And if Britain retains Tripolitania it will have a frontier with Tunisia and thus be equally "interested in maintaining peace in North Africa." So far so good, or so bad. For the policy of appeasing Arabs by the

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JONATHAN CAPE

sacrifice of the French, though superficially attractive, is fraught with danger. There are signs that the Arab League may be a Frankenstein monster which will soon turn upon its creator. Already Mr. Jinnah—the spokesman of the Moslem League in India—is publicly announcing that the election of the French from Syria is simply a first instalment which must in due course be followed by the ejection of the British.

BRITISH OFFICER IN PALESTINE
(1918—1920)

TORYISM AND INDIA

SIR,—Captain Quintin Hogg, the Conservative candidate for Oxford City, was reported in the *Oxford Mail* of June 23rd, 1945, as saying that "by decent Indians, he meant those who were his comrades in the Army, and not the Congress-wallahs who would have given up their country to the Japanese." This is, of course, a straightforward slander.

Captain Hogg is at present a Junior Minister of the Crown. Through the Tory Reform Committee, he wields a great deal of power among the Conservatives. He certainly would not, on his own initiative, deviate from the Tory policy towards India, as laid down by the Tory back-room committees.

Is it then the Tory policy to consider Congress as pro-Japanese, when the very contrary is the case? And is it true that, if the Tories receive by any mischance a majority in the next Parliament, they will treat Congressmen as indecent fascists and quislings, not fitted to sit on the Viceroy's Executive Council?

Congress is at the moment in conference with the Viceroy; and whatever the fate of the proposals now being discussed, which we understand owe much to the influence of the Labour Ministers in the Coalition Cabinet, if the spirit behind them is to be poisoned by the Tories as soon as they get into power, both Britain and India have a right to know it. Do the Tories intend to break up the continuity of Britain's policy towards India and the Commonwealth?

I have received many anxious inquiries on this point. As Congressmen are openly proclaimed by the Tories as indecent criminals and quislings, every vote for a Conservative must mean an additional vote for the policy of oppression in India.

Every Indian knows that, throughout the ten years of the Long Parliament, it was only Labour men like Mr. Sorensen. Mr. Cove, Lord Strabolgi and others who raised their voices for India. Truly has Mr. Sorensen claimed that he and his Labour colleagues represented the interests of 400 million people in the British Parliament. And outside Parliament, it has been Mr. Laski, the "sinister Gestapo" man, who has stood up, against all odds, for the rights and liberties of down-trodden India, comprising no less than one-fifth of the whole human race. Please allow me, as an average Indian and as a voter, to express our deeply felt gratitude to these Britishers of goodwill and true principles.

D. M. SEN
Secretary, Indian Journalists'
and Writers' Association Abroad

SUDETEN GERMANS

SIR,—Mr. Whitehouse's reminder was in my case unnecessary. I was well aware that when Dr. Benes assured the Peace Conference that his government intended to adopt "the principles applied in the constitution of the Swiss Republic" and "to make of the Czechoslovak Republic a sort of Switzerland," he added the qualifying clause, "while paying regard, of course, to the special conditions in Bohemia." But I paid Dr. Benes the compliment of assuming that he was not quibbling. The Swiss model is federalism, and the essence of it is that Germans, French and Italians are in all respects equal partners. The Germans in Czechoslovakia were never that; they were a tolerated "minority," to which certain rights were granted. That was implied even in the name of the Republic.

I never suggested that Henlein's professed loyalty was genuine. What I said was that the German Sudetens who supported his party voted not for separation but for Home Rule, i.e., for Swiss federalism.

H. N. BRAILSFORD

SIR,—You published in your paper's issue of the 9th instant a letter signed by three former members of the Czechoslovak Parliament calling themselves "Parliamentary Delegation of Sudeten Labour." The German Social-Democratic Labour Party of Czechoslovakia had 11 members in the last Czechoslovak Parliament, eight of whom have been living in exile since 1938 and 1939 respectively. The three signatories of the above-mentioned letter are in no way entitled to speak or act on behalf, or in the name, of all eight of us, or of the Party as a whole.

It is well known to anybody conversant with Czechoslovak politics that the others do not share their outlook on the problem of Czechoslovak Germans, and that—apart from myself—Mr. F. Krejci, for instance, holds exactly opposite views on all main issues involved. It is also significant that the letter has not the signature of Mr. S. Taub, former Deputy Speaker of the Czechoslovak Parliament and Secretary General of the Social-Democratic Labour Party in Czechoslovakia. That can be e plained only by his not being in accord with th political opinions of Mr. W. Jaksch and his friend

IRENE KIRPAL,
Deputy of the German Soci
Democratic Labour Party in th
last Czechoslovak Parliament

26, Downing Court,
Brunswick Square, W.C.1.

PLEBISCITES

SIR,—Mr. F. W. Hagger, in your issue of June 16th says: ". . . I say 'controlled' because a Gallu Poll consults only a selected number of people, an the party bosses would have little difficulty in makin sure that they themselves controlled the selection. Since this one sentence confuses so many issues, ma I be allowed to set them out one by one?

(1) The Gallup Poll and any other kind of samplin survey starts out to interview a given number o persons. This number is determined by referen to the nature of the problem to be investigated and th nature of the population being sampled.

(2) The men and women interviewed are, it is tru selected, but they are selected at random, which mea that everybody has an equal chance of being include in the Survey. There is absolutely no question o selection being determined by political consideration

(3) The work of the Gallup Poll is, of course, completely unofficial and we have no affiliations with an political party or, in fact, any other kind of organisation.

(4) It is both our fortune and misfortune that th term "Gallup Poll" is used nowadays as a synonym for a referendum or any other kind of test of publi opinion or public attitudes. Clearly this was th sense in which the term was used by the Prim Minister and subsequent radio speakers and no mor should be read into it than that.

HENRY DURANT

British Institute of Public Opinion,
Aldwych House, London, W.C.2.

A BOUQUET

SIR,—You and your readers may be interested t know that on page 109 of the report "Towards th Conversion of England," dedicated to the memory o Dr. William Temple, and presented to the Church Assembly last week there is the following:—

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

To poor Mrs. Coleridge, her brother-in-law ust have seemed the perfect man, or, at any te, by contrast with "C," the perfect husband. obert Southey was healthy, he was sober, he as dependable. At Greta Hall he restored rder, with his kindly, bantering authority, to the onfused remains of Coleridge's family. He made oor Mrs. Coleridge laugh, talking the make-up omic language they had invented together; he as the only person who could distract her sister, Mrs. Southey, from her preoccupation with regnancies and her worryings over Sara's weak yes. Even Mrs. Lovell—there was a bolus he ould never swallow, Coleridge used to say—but ven in Mrs. Lovell's widowed cheek he could voke a faint response; Mrs. Lovell, who, like outhey's Poor Mary, the Maid of the Inn—

> Never complains, but her silence implies
> The composure of settled distress.

The children loved him, of course, and in spite f everything it must be said that on the whole, ith Southey there, Mrs. Coleridge felt very appy at Greta Hall. Besides, Southey was a amous man. As a literary character he was uperior in every way. It was not only that he as Poet Laureate, and therefore a good and reat man: the epics he planned were actually ritten, thousands of lines long. He never aused pain by publishing incomprehensible ragments like "Koula Khan," as Mrs. Coleridge elieved it was called; and of course regularly, very year, there were at least three articles written or the *Quarterly*. Every year he earned money: ot very much, but quite enough for all the Fricker sisters and daughters and nieces. We can ee Mrs. Coleridge's picture of Southey as clearly s we can understand Macaulay's equally simplified description of Southey's political ineptitude nd bigotry. There is truth in both. There is ruth, also, in the accepted picture of Southey, s the norm, the dependable constant, revealing he idiosyncrasies of the other Lake Characters y contrast.

These great characters are so variable and complex that the more we study them the more hey seem to escape us. A new Life of Southey* as just appeared, written in the best tradition of academic biography, objective, factual, documented, and only occasionally marred by a desire o make out the Case For. It shows us that Southey is no exception, that he is in some respects not the profoundest yet certainly the most puzzling mystery of them all. Reading this ife we realise the deep contradictions of his character. Was he really so strong and self-sufficient? And as for his books, ought he to have been a writer at all? In what sense was Southey a poet? In looks, certainly. When Byron first saw his lean and imperious figure he was struck by what he called Southey's *epic* appearance. "To have that poet's head and shoulders I would almost have written his Sapphics." The extent of Southey's output was equally impressive. Before he was twenty he had written 35,000 lines. As soon as *Madoc*, n number of lines, was completed, he began *Thalaba*, n^2, the very next morning. Yet has anyone really enjoyed Southey's poetry? Certain serious and religious-minded men asserted that they were improved by its moral tone—Cardinal Newman was one of them; but his poems made Southey very little money, and their flatness and the absolutely unflagging clichés were made fun of from the start. They inspired the first good English parody, in the *Anti-Jacobin*, and were honoured by a famous stanza in Byron's *English Bards:*

> Oh! Southey! Southey! cease thy varied song!
> A bard may chant too often and too long.

They belonged to the new Romantic School, it is true, but the Romance was of an already outmoded pattern. Vaguely Eastern subjects are described in a genteelly Della Cruscan manner, ornamented with names like Tlalala and Tezozomoc, set before a fancifully Oriental background,

> Reclined beneath a Cocoa's feathery shade
> Ladurlad lies.

and the poems are so far from Wordsworthian in their appreciation of nature that when their author is first confronted by the Valley of Rocks he can see nothing but a "palace of the pre-Adamite kings," and his comment on Loch Linnhe, revealed to him by sunset, is that it almost persuades him to believe in Ossian.

Yet Byron could call him the only existing *entire* man of letters. He was, perhaps, an entire bookman. He read books, tended books, collected and edited books, all through his life. He was not a good critic of books. He could see no merit in *The Ancient Mariner*, nothing but madness in Blake. But he loved *books*, and book-making was perhaps the motive of his versifying. Every few years the Southey Complete Poems were issued in one volume, as cold and thick as a tombstone. Each volume was fully indexed, and I have always thought the index the most pleasurable thing about them:

> Blessed, Island of the, description of 499
> Blood, human, drunk by the Florida Indians, and formerly by the Irish, under peculiar circumstances 382
> Boiling Well, near Bristol, some particulars of 305
> (Footnote: "how large a part of existing evil, physical as well as moral, is remediable by human means.")

Interesting in itself, this gives another clue to Southey's motives for versifying; the collection and co-ordination of facts. But why in verse? His prose has been as often praised as his poetry has been abused. It is clear and easy, wonderfully modern in its texture, a pleasant vehicle for recording the facts and impressions in which he delighted. A serviceable style for a diary certainly—and Southey's letters and journals, particularly his *Journal of a Tour in Scotland*, conveniently edited by C. H. Herford, are readable. Perhaps, if he lived now, Southey might be an effective journalist or "documentary man." The factual documentation of his Life of Nelson was most carefully and enthusiastically carried out. It was the kind of work he enjoyed most.

But even about his prose there is an unrelenting superficiality, which is seen at its worst when Southey is being opinionated on subjects he knows very little about. He justly thought that some of his best writing was contained in the *Life of Wesley*, which certainly is remarkably well balanced and objective for so opinionated a man. Yet, income tax or the mystical experience, he steps forward to explain the problems at the root of life with the same stupefying confidence. "A man of Wesley's acuteness should surely see that Conversions are instantaneous because they are produced by plain miracles." Mystery, to Southey, was something as conventional as his Oriental poetry.

Gradually Southey gave up verse and confined himself to prose altogether. After *The Vision of Judgment* (his too, too loyal description of George III's entry into Heaven) Southey wrote no more poetry; but this was very far from being the result of Byron's devastating reply, Byron's own *Vision* of Southey, of the Laureate who had "written much blank verse and blanker prose, And more of both than anybody knows." It was not Southey who blenched: it was Byron who had been made to turn pale by Southey's description of him as the leader of the "Satanic School." Byron's lips, says Medwin, turned as pale as death. Neither Byron's reply, nor the other attacks he suffered, produced any such effect on Southey. And herein lies yet another contradiction in this man's character. For all the geniality of his overlordship of Greta Hall, he was cold and impenetrable outside it. Southey had few friends, and no sworn brothers. "Southey is the *semper idem*," said Coleridge. "It is impossible for a good heart not to esteem and love him, but yet the love is one-fourth, the esteem all the remainder." The fact is there was a certain excess of goodness about Southey, and even in earlier pantisocratic days Coleridge used to suggest to him that "there may be too high a state of moral health, perhaps even *virtue* is liable to a *plethora*." Southey's nose for vice was prodigious. He was the only man who ever dared to say that he found a deficiency of moral purpose about the *Essays of Elia*. His sense of personal virtue was equally developed. Southey's change of political opinion was much more complete and violent than even his Lake friends', yet he was much more virtuous about it, and more pleased about it, than Wordsworth himself could bear. Nor did he give up poetry from any sense of inadequacy. Mixed with this consciousness of right was an equally irritating certainty of genius. "I know of no poem," he would say, "which can claim a place between *Thalaba* and *Orlando Furioso*." And he had to admit that he had never written a line which, for any compunctious reason, he "would wish to blot." His indifference to criticism was not less annoying, in fact, because it was due not so much to largeness of spirit as to certainty of excellence.

Who can solve the contradictions? One characteristic of Southey certainly helps to explain his failure as a poet and his gradual withdrawal even from verse. As time went on he acquired a real aversion to any kind of deep feeling. He could not bear its expression even in poetry. Tragedy of any kind must not be mentioned. The name of his favourite child, who died, must never be uttered. All must be stamped down, kept within.

One of the few important contemporary judgments of Southey omitted from this book is a sentence of Carlyle's. Carlyle, with his indolent insight, had noticed the quick and passionate feeling beneath Southey's suave exterior.

> How has this man continued with such a nervous system to keep alive for sixty years? I reckon a deep mute monition of conscience had spoken to him: "You are capable of running mad if you don't take care. Acquire habitudes, stick firm as adamant to them, and work, continuously work!"

Hold fast, Southey seems to have said to himself, to the permanent things. Hold fast to family fixtures. Hold fast to facts. Hold fast to books, "the only safe attachment." Near his death, when his mind had failed, he would still walk round his library, taking the volumes from the shelves, one by one. Hold fast to his books—and hold fast, above all, to opinions. 1832 was approaching, and did not the new epidemic of cholera seem like a means of awaking the nation to a sense of its subversive madness and wickedness? Hold on to the time when all rebels and outlaws would see the evil of their ways, when the young Shelley would acknowledge his error, and even Milton be reformed, by the combined influence of Paradise and Time. Milton whom, in his *Vision of Judgment*, Southey had been gratified to observe among the Shades approvingly receiving George III:

> With other emotion
> Milton's severer shade I saw, and in reverence humbled
> Gazed on that soul sublime: of passion now as of blindness
> Heal'd, and no longer here to Kings and to Hierarchs hostile,
> He was assoil'd from taint of the fatal fruit.

As Walter Scott said, Southey's prejudices rendered him an unsafe counsellor when the spirit of the age was to be consulted. But let us remember, besides these prejudices, the contradiction, once more, of his championing of the poor, the help he gave so willingly to young and unknown writers, and the affectionate care with which "Uncle Southey" looked after Coleridge's wife and children. He lived his life as he decided it ought to be lived, and he did achieve a kind of integrity through his work and his self-discipline. *In Labore Quies.* Was that the answer? But the reader has an opportunity of deciding for himself. The facts are set out more clearly than ever before in this new Life. To speculate further, as Mrs. Coleridge used to say, would mangle the thing.

STEPHEN POTTER

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* *Southey.* By JACK SIMMONS. *Collins.* 12s. 6d.

NEW NOVELS

Three Men in New Suits. By J. B. PRIESTLEY. *Heinemann.* 8s. 6d.

The Open Mind. By GEORGE BERNANOS. Translated by G. DUNLOP. *The Bodley Head.* 8s. 6d.

The Shadow Falls. By GEORGE SIMENON. Translated by STUART GILBERT. *Routledge.* 10s. 6d.

> "Most people aren't so bad when you really get to know them, are they?"
>
> "If God opened our eyes to the invisible, which of us would not fall dead—yes, dead!—at the sight, the mere hideous sight of the abominable proliferation of evil."

It would be quite wrong, I think, to see in these two quotations simply the voice of the new against the old, the pagan against the Christian, of the superficial against the profound. Priestley's sentence has the thin jollity of political good cheer, and Bernanos rings richly beside it. But there are sentences in the synoptic Gospels and Rousseau which are not widely different from Priestley's in their faith; and the mad sermon on hell in *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* has passages which read like both Bernanos and Schopenhauer. It must be said that evil has at this moment a certain snob and fashionable appeal. We are anxiously divesting ourselves of anti-religious naiveties, and it seems far easier to achieve profundity by pessimism than by hope. Also it is hard to distinguish the philosophies of these two writers from the context of the two books which they have written, and whereas Bernanos has written a work of art, Priestley has produced a topical tract. But when all this is granted, it remains true that the apparently hopeless writer will leave many readers with more hope than will the forced optimism of Mr. Priestley.

I think it is a pity that *Three Men in New Suits* should have been described as a novel, because its considerable interest is purely sociological. Priestley is the exponent of contemporary popular humanism. He is a kind and intelligent man, greatly occupied with discovering immediate enemies and courageously giving battle to them. "Come on, chaps," is the last exordium of the demobilised gentleman-sergeant to his two buddies, leading them into the new fight against malice, selfishness and reaction. "But where to?" Bernanos would rightly ask. "Where to, after the dragon has been killed?" And if Priestley replies that this question can be answered later, that the killing of the dragon is too urgent a task to postpone, then he may well be right, but the ultimate prospects for his crusaders are dubious.

I doubt whether Priestley has fully appreciated even the immediate problem. The real spiritual and psychological difficulties of the returning soldier will be far grimmer than the mere opposition of the old gang. War and the wastes of German Europe must have destroyed many old accepted values, left many wounds and many voids. Priestley's too simple hope is that the soldier has learnt what's what and that he must stick by his pals and fight for it. But this fight against the old gang will be a mere skirmish before the real battle begins against the barrenness of the human soul. If the first is lost, the world will go to hell quicker and more dramatically, but if it is won on nothing but this bright good will of the boys' camp, hell won't be postponed for long.

Priestley shies away from evil. Whenever the Nazis are mentioned, they are described by the demobilised soldiers (and with their creator's evident approval) as "daft." The bad newspaper king, the bad rich girl, the inane conservative under-secretary, are all dummies. For Bernanos, on the other hand, there are no good chaps: each individual is a battle-field in which evil fights the microscopic forces of Grace. (I fancy that doctrinally he weights his scales to the borders of heresy.) He is concerned with the real battle, obsessed with the old Adam rather than the old gang. Yet this poetic picture of a village suppurating in mortal sin is not depressing. "Blasphemy, doctor, perilously engages the soul, yet it does *engage* it. Experience proves that the revolt in man still remains a mysterious act, of which the Devil may not possess the whole secret." A powerful belief in damnation does imply the possibility, however remote, of salvation. It is not a question here of Christian doctrine, but of the richness and profundity of conflict in man. Blasphemy engages the soul, which Priestley's good chaps fail to do.

Yet Bernanos cannot be accused of hurling his theological thunderbolts from the remote summit of Olympus. He has earned the respect of even the sternest practical progressive by courageously engaging in the preliminary skirmish, and interpreting it in his transcendent terms. For a prominent Catholic it was an act of great courage to write against Franco in 1938; and in this war he has steadfastly fought the old gang of Vichy. A protest must, however, be made against a wickedly misleading statement in the blurb th "he is one of the *very few* important Fren writers who never for one instant wavered in t direction of collaboration."

The fault of Bernanos as a novelist is overcharge his books with a too homogeneo atmosphere and emotion. He overplays h hand. I am not suggesting that his phil sophy is too pessimistic, that he should decency have given us more rays sunshine. It is a question of literary discretio of the writing itself. The wilful madness an obscurity become almost a smoke-screen at time Let there be night all through, but let the nigh be a little less fog-bound. And there is no doub that Bernanos can write with a wonderful an illuminating lucidity, both as a philosopher an as a novelist.

> "Ah, Philip, pray that you may know what is to pity, before your experience of disgust ha poisoned your pity at the source."
>
> With her back to the window she looked slighte than Philip ever remembered her, with an indefinab air of impassive frivolity which kept her always dangerously outside life and its risks, quite ou of reach in the kind of magic solitude only prope to dolls.

Although I am among the readers who have been more cheered by Bernanos's cesspool than by Priestley's brisk progressive banner, I would hasten to add that if I had to choose between them for my electoral vote, Priestley would certainly have it. The Catholic engages my soul, but would rather trust my body to the progressive politician. Utopia might be governed by Priestley, harried at night by Bernanos; but one would not wish to be governed by priests for all the tormented acres of Church property in Spain. One would not wish a Weygandist state any more than one would wish all art to be on the level of *Three Men in New Suits.*

For the purposes of this review Simenon comes half-way between Priestley and Bernanos. His characters are bad enough, but it is a kind of saucy badness which entertains without disturbing us. My difficulty is that I have read Mr. Desmond MacCarthy on *The Shadow Fall* and I agree with everything that he wrote. Simenon's books have always been admirable on their own ground, but for years critics have been anticipating one of those vertical jumps on to new plane of which Mr. Koestler writes. He has always been something a great deal more than a writer of crime stories, something a little less than an important novelist. Acute, witty and lively though this new book is (newly translated

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that is, for it appeared before the war), I cannot feel that it marks its writer's long-awaited promotion. It is an intelligent and not unsympathetic study of the vices of provincial society, and of the catastrophic career of a careerist.

Both the French books have been unusually happy in their translators. PHILIP TOYNBEE

DEBATABLE LANDS

Eastern Europe between the Wars. By HUGH SETON-WATSON. *Cambridge University Press.* 21s.

A book on Eastern Europe by a son of Professor Seton-Watson would naturally be written with the knowledge of one whose cradle was rocked on the bosom of that deep. In this region, however, imagination and sense of perspective are more essential than knowledge. Mr. Seton-Watson has both: he sees and treats his Eastern Europe, the whole area lying between Russia on the East and Germany, Austria, and Italy on the West, as one complex; one in its poverty and predominantly peasant population, one in the interpenetration of nations which inhabit it, one in the insecurity and violence of its political life, one in its internecine feuds and in the rivalries of the neighbouring Great Powers to control it. Thus the writer constructs his work like a building; the ground-floor is the life of the peasant populations. Everywhere but in Czechoslovakia, which forms an exception to many of the conditions of Eastern Europe, the large majority of the people are peasants. They may be the labourers of Hungarian or Polish landlords, still living like serfs. Or they may be freeholders, fairly prosperous large or medium farmers, gaining from protective systems which keep up the prices of their produce. Or the far more numerous smallholders, unable to grow enough to feed their own families, unable even to buy necessities like salt and lamp-oil, whose condition grows steadily worse with land-parcellation. Mr. Seton-Watson sees no remedy but co-operation, but that demands an educated peasantry; in Eastern Europe it has been practised by Bulgars, by Slovenes organised by their priests, and by Polish Ukrainians. But planned industrialisation is essential to lift the people off the over-crowded land. As for the peasant of romance, Seton-Watson will have none of him: he is a propaganda puppet. Thus in Rumania:

> Along the asphalt road to Sinaia at the week-end the luxurious cars make an unbroken line. But if he turns off after ten miles on to a side-road, the tourist will soon find himself in as primitive a village, with as many dirty, ill-housed, ill-clad, cheerless wretches, as he likes.

The author pours his vast subject into a moral and political mould. He is a democrat; he loves the people, and, by the same token, he hates their rulers. His second storey is a summary of the political history of those nations, of whose ruling classes he can find little good to say, whether they are aristocrats, bourgeois, or derived from the peasantry like the Yugoslavs. Thus he dislikes the Hungarians, detests the Poles, despises the Rumanians. The fire fed by love and anger burns hot; and many people, infatuated in the English manner with one particular nation, will be affronted by Mr. Seton-Watson's unsparing strictures. I have some reservations myself, on the international review which comes next. But when I read these names, what a series of faces floats across my memory! Vain and callous faces of aristocrats; corrupt card-sharper faces of Balkan politicians; faces of business men, annealed by their sole passion into masks of greed. Mr. Seton-Watson is right to be angry. It is notable that he never uses the word "brutality" except specifically for physical cruelty, and it recurs like a leitmotiv. His pet abomination is "romantic nationalism," and indeed the aim of the national State has fatal results when applied to countries of mixed races. He would like to see federal autonomy agreed for Transylvania by Hungary and Bulgaria, and for Macedonia in the framework of a Balkan federation. But unfortunately nationalism is a fact in politics: its senseless rage possesses the minorities as well as the rulers who abuse them.

The book is particularly interesting for the way in which it reveals how bad government has prepared the road for Russian influence:—

> Ordinary men and women who have asked for reforms, protested against bureaucratic abuses, or resisted the gendarmerie in the execution of some wanton act of brutality, have been denounced as "Bolsheviks" or "Communists," beaten, tortured, sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, or killed, . . . This principle has been turned against its users. . . . The word, "Communism," whose political significance is unknown to the Eastern European peasants, has come to be associated with the fight of brave men and women for freedom has become identified with civil liberties.

I hope that I have made it clear that this is not only an enthralling, but an important book; it should (revised and brought up to date) be put on the syllabus of all university courses on modern European history.

Here are the inevitable grumbles. Mr. Seton-Watson should not use the device of allusion: it is impertinent to assume airily that anyone will understand what is meant by "the notorious paragraph xiv": the maddened reader has never heard of it. Secondly, the maps are shocking. Does Mr. Seton-Watson think that the British or American student carries the "Times Atlas" under his arm, or the situation of Polesia or the Banat in his head? What is needed is, at least, a coloured physical map with transparencies to fit over it, showing agricultural products and industries, nationalities, and the old provinces as well as modern frontiers. And if the Cambridge University Press says to me that that can't be done for a guinea, then all I say to it is "Fiddlesticks!" FREDA WHITE

THE MAN-MADE WORLD

This Chemical Age; The Miracle of Man-Made Materials. By WILLIAMS HAYNES. *Secker and Warburg.* 12s. 6d.

Mr. Haynes is, the dust-jacket tells us, the owner and publisher, now retired, of the American business magazine *Chemical Industries*, and the author of a standard textbook on *Chemical Economics*. He certainly seems to know what has been going on in the world of industrial chemistry: not only the scientific theory of the extraordinary recent developments, but also a great deal about the personalities, finance and business arrangements. It is, mainly, the story of recent industrial practice which he tells in this book, which has been supervised for the English edition by Dr. J. P. Lawrie.

It is a good rousing story: the invention of synthetic dyes, and their connection with explosives; perfumes; sulphanilamide; the smuggling of quinine and rubber seeds out of S. America; the processing of natural rubber and rubber substitutes; chemical raw materials from farm wastes; synthetic fibres; plastics and so on. There is not much of the modern industry that Mr. Haynes overlooks. And there is a glance back in the first few chapters to the fathers of the science: Dalton (a "methodical old bachelor") and Cavendish ("This frail slender aristocrat moved mountains of inertia. He changed search into research"). Perhaps those are slightly unfair examples of the rather *Boys' Own Paper* style in which the book is written (the expression "They were chums" occurs only once, on p. 205). But Mr. Haynes is robust.

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A pleasing accompaniment of Mr. Haynes' forthrightness is his generosity. It is an American book, and it has an American outlook; Mr. Haynes likes chemical research to result in "a practical, workaday, commercial operation, making ton lots of two useful chemicals that ten years ago were rare and costly reagents sold by the gram." But he gives credit where it is due. Chemistry, he says, was born in England and brought up in France. In a surprising number of the new industrial developments, the credit for the initial discoveries goes somewhere outside America, and Mr. Haynes is perfectly ready to say so. There are, in fact, very few mistakes in the book, apart from printing mishaps to the formulæ (almost the only ones in the book) on p. 154. Altogether, I can think of few better birthday presents for a fifteen-year-old boy.

C. H. Waddington

THE HIGHER SENTIMENTALISM

Long, Long Ago. By Alexander Woolcott. *Cassell.* *8s. 6d.*

Despite their wise-cracking Americans are far more sentimental than we. Miss Dorothy Parker, for example, when not indulging in repartee, pours out verse of a cloying sweetness; and the late Alexander Woolcott liked to wipe away a tear in public. The famous and the newly dead would stir him to delicious warmth. They had to be famous of course; if they weren't, he with an anecdote or two would make them so. The obituary of Barrie in *Long, Long Ago* directs the eye to a lonely figure in the distance; that of the playwright's mother. We are shown Mrs. Lindbergh, at the moment of identifying her baby's clothing in court—"in that hushed moment the case, stripped to its essentials, was revealed for what it really was—evil incarnate standing accused by every American hearth." And the portrait of George Gershwin; some gentle, admiring gibes about the composer's hands and style of living lead up to the revelation that he was a genius. We aren't told in what direction the genius lay; in music apparently. Geniuses, then, you might suppose, came this critic's way as thick as mulberries. Not at all; it is a term, he says, that he has seldom used. Woolcott travelled widely and met a host of people, and quite honestly, in the composer of *Rhapsody in Blue*, he detects genius. Disarming, in its way.

Like all sentimentalists, he over-simplifies. He is a Janeite, and it helps his admiration to drag in Kipling (whom he met) and to call her "England's Jane, the frail, diffident little spinster who saw little in this world beyond the hedgerows of her own countryside." Frail, diffident! He reads Housman—the one poet of the last fifty years, apparently, he can read—and sees no falling-off in the posthumous last volume; quotes, in fact, from a rather indifferent poem, and says it makes his hair stand on end in the approved fashion. Housman, by the way, comes on the scene as "a monkish and abashing professor of Latin." And here is a valuation of current drama:

> All this happens in a play of the stature, let us say, of *Cyrano de Bergerac* or *Peer Gynt* or *The Cherry Orchard* or *Heartbreak House*.

The play? Mr. Thornton Wilder's *The Skin of Our Teeth*, which has lately arrived in London. It isn't so much that Woolcott's judgments are silly—as a rule, he admires the safely established—but that the occasion makes him go the whole hog. If he backs a winner it must come home lengths ahead.

I find this sort of sentimentalism exasperating, whether applied to the arts or to people, but there can be no doubt about Woolcott's journalistic appeal. *Long, Long Ago* is highly accomplished in its manner, which might be described by the "Full Fruit Flavour" now attached to jam-jars. His gossip about celebrities, especially in the theatrical and song-writing world, can be first-rate; and he has a nose for a story. I liked best in this volume, which is considerably below the level of *While Rome Burns*, his discovery of the Editor of the *Fountain Inn Tribune*. Robert Quillen, a genuine original, spattered his columns with apparently libellous reports on weddings, funerals and other occasions (these were invented to fill space and attract readers), and once sold his paper for a dollar, buying it back three years later for the same sum. Someone had sent Woolcott a cutting and afte reading the *Fountain Inn Tribune* for years h paid its editor a visit. Charmingly he make quite a legend out of Robert Quillen. All th people who appear in *Long, Long Ago* are legend Your enjoyment of them may depend on ho far—how little, rather—you are an iconoclast.

G. W. Stonier

EDUCATIONAL REFORM

The Educational Reconstruction of Education. By C. Black. *Gollancz.* 8s. 6d

It is an axiom with which all teachers woul agree that there is little to be gained by a me extension of the length of time spent by childre in schools, unless we also consider very seriousl what is taught in those schools. Most teachers, I imagine, would also agree that in compariso with the amount of time given to discussing the administrative side of education, too little—though not quite as little as Mr. Black thinks—is spent on discussing its content. They will therefore welcome Mr. Black's lively little contribution to the latter discussion, even if they do not find themselves in agreement with all he says.

He supports the profound distinction made by that great educationalist, the late Dr. Stead, between subjects taught for "reproduction" and subjects taught for "recognition," the former being very broadly subjects on which the learner might be expected to face an examination, and the latter what are commonly called "background" subjects; and rightly points out that in a modern society in which the sum of specialist knowledge is continuously on the increase, the right development of "recognition" education becomes of more and more importance, if the citizen is to be equipped for life in any reasonable way. He is also broadly right in saying that present-day secondary education gives primary place to "reproduction" teaching, although I think that he greatly, and Dr. Stead slightly, exaggerates the position. Good history teachers, for example, will give as much "recognition" as "reproduction" teaching, except possibly in the Certificate year—as T. R. Glover said long ago, "it is a poor subject that will not get into a lesson on Roman history." But, generally speaking, I sympathise with Mr. Black's aim; about his practical proposals I feel much more difficulty.

He wants, in the first place, to abolish all examinations here and now, and to leave the

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etermination of the child's educational future ntirely to teachers' reports—with some psycho-gical tests when satisfactory tests have been und. This, it seems to me, would at the esent stage lead to a disastrous state of log-lling of school against school. Secondly, he oposes to change the stages of education, to ter the primary stage to 7-to-13-plus, and ereafter to have five types of secondary school, ammar, technical, art, music and trade, the st three being definitely more vocational than e present technical schools, though he demands, trifle illogically, that they should also do a high roportion of "background" teaching. This sug-estion is partly retrograde (as regards the trade hools) and in any case very difficult: as Mr. lack envisages a steady progress in the arrange-ent of the school curriculum I do not see what urpose it serves.

Thirdly, he proposes to confine his "repro-uction" education in the primary years to English, enough arithmetic for shopping, and little hygiene," the English to be taught in pecifically "English classes" taking up a con-iderable amount of time. With this suggestion find myself in profound disagreement; though think English needs to be taught much better, believe that the right way to teach it is not y multiplying classes in English, but re-uiring better English and better attention to nglish in all subjects; and to confine "repro-uction" teaching for children up to 13½ to this eagre range would, I am convinced, thwart and isappoint a desire to get hold of tough facts and eproduce them which is to be found in a great any children.

I could go on taking up points, e.g. the total bsence of any reference to government and/or ivics; but I have said enough to show that this ook is at least stimulating to argument.

Margaret I. Cole

ALGIERS

lgiers 1941-1943. A Temporary Expedient. By Renée Pierre-Gosset. Translated from the French by Nancy Hecksher. *Cape.* 10s. 6d.

More than once Madame Pierre-Gosset finds erself asking her readers to remember how new, ow unprecedented, was the position in which he conspirators whose activities she describes und themselves. Her readers are in something f the same position, for *Algiers*, seen from one point of view, is pure Eric Ambler or Valentine Williams. There are plot and counter-plot; treason and double treason; spies of all sexes, nationalities, degrees of turpitude. There are secret meetings and secret documents; there are public protestations and secret corrections; there are explanations given by all kinds of actors and apologists from ex-Secretary Hull down to Mr. Demaree Bess. As an adventure story, *Algiers* makes first-class reading.

It is the story of the invasion of North Africa as seen from the side of the conspirators who planned the collaboration of the underground with the American agents. The complexity of the situation was matched by the variety of the actors. There were Gaullists, anti-Gaullists, neutrals; there were anti-British who were pro-American; there were representatives of all shades of dislike for the Germans and the Italians; there were several kinds of monarchists; there were, of course, fools and knaves as well as cowards, heroes and *condottieri*. Names and causes are thrown about and, despite a good many useful notes, the reader who doesn't already know a fair amount, is going to be constantly baffled; so many Astiers de la Vigerie for instance! Of course, with all the good will in the world and all the objectivity possible, no contemporary chronicler of so tangled a story can be totally clear, consistent and correct. Here are eye-witness, second-hand, third-hand, fourth-hand accounts. Some of what is told is probable but not proven, some is so improbable that one would like to have it proven, which is asking too much now. Madame Pierre-Gosset knows that there are key witnesses who are still discreetly silent. Admiral Fenard for one. Other Ariadne threads run back to the State Department in Washington. Others may never be followed up; are, perhaps, already destroyed.

But Madame Pierre-Gosset is not merely telling a story, she is making a case. She is providing an explanation, first of all, of the origins of the Darlan regime as seen from the French point of view and then she speculates, plausibly, more than plausibly, on the reasons why the United States created and supported the Darlan regime. On this question, Madame Pierre-Gosset is frankly partisan. Her villain is Mr. Robert Murphy, whose experience and success are, at the moment, being devoted to the political problems of Germany. She is too intelligent to see the problem in merely personal terms, or in merely party terms, fascist and anti-fascist. What was vainly attempted was to exclude from the conduct of political warfare in North Africa, all *politics*. Of course this aim was an idle dream, for the vacuum was filled by Vichy politics; the *status quo* alone benefits from these gentlemen's agreements. And, all doctrinal questions apart, to choose Vichy meant to choose men who had decided to stop fighting in 1940 and were not anxious to resume fighting in 1942, at any rate without making their own very special terms. We know that the experiment failed, that it was impossible to fight Pétainism under the banner of Pétain, to fight Nazism by instruments that had adapted as much of Nazism as they could to the conditions of France and North Africa. Indeed, it is hard not to have some sympathy with the bewilderment of the parent who could not see why her son who had got the *croix de guerre* for fighting the British and Gaullists in Syria should now have to turn round and fight on their side. Mr. Murphy, General Giraud and their numerous apologists in America and here, never got this point into their heads. It was all a question of another *combinazione*. But people, ordinary people, don't fight for *combinazioni*, or at any rate don't fight with zeal. It was perhaps permissible in Americans to have hoped that the slogan "fighting for France" would prove adequate. But they forgot that every term in the slogan had been made ambiguous by just those elements whom they sponsored, by Pétain, by Darlan, by all those who had eaten dirt in various forms in the two deadly years. The French, who insisted on something a little more concrete, were not timid or uncombative. They had simply been sold down the river once and wanted to avoid being sold again. The brisk turnabouts of the Admiral were not for them. So it all failed; it had failed before Darlan was shot. The policy may have been justified in a narrow but important military sense, but a political price had to be paid for it. That the price has been so high is due, more than anything else, to the *amour propre* of men who backed a series of lame runners for the wrong race. Indeed, the preoccupation with elderly and sage generals was carried to such lengths that there is some temptation to believe the theory (not advanced in this book) that there was, in the State Department, a most Machiavellian partisan of de Gaulle who made him necessary by all the futile manoeuvring that went on. If there was such a master-mind at work, he did a swell job; we may be sure, however, that his name was not Robert Murphy.

William Eaton

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Three crude and hurriedly-written booklets appear as a last Tory election broadside. None of them contains any new facts or arguments. The authors take up the theme of Mr. Churchill's first broadcast and embroider it with fancies which any Grub Street hack would have been ashamed to utter. Thus "Candidus":

> It is relevant to point out that no Socialist M.P. has been killed in action. Socialist M.P.s, with an unblushing respect for their own skins, prefer to do *their* fighting with their mouths.

Thus, too, with Mr. Garth, writing about Michael Foot, Frank Owen (Cassius, Cato, etc.) :

> These yellow backed Romans (I wonder if the colour may be more than skin deep).

After that, of course, none of them has any difficulty in distorting anything. "Candidus" opens his book :

> Mr. Aneurin Bevan told this year's Labour Conference at Blackpool that his Party must seek the extinction of the Conservatives for at least twenty-five years. . . . It is difficult to conceive a more undemocratic statement, even from a Socialist democrat, than this one from Mr. Bevan, for it would entail the disfranchisement of 11,000,000 British men and women.

A little later in the same book we are told categorically :

> The Socialist policy is to discredit Parliament as the preliminary to doing away with it.

The argument in all three books is essentially similar. Mr. O'Brien is concerned to show the Socialist leaders as nonentities who would be incapable of developing a strong foreign policy and who would be bound to sell out either to Russia or America. Mr. Garth, who claims he is a "floating voter," trots out the most hoary tales about the two minority Labour Governments, says they ran away from power in 1924 and 1931, and that they have deserted the war effort at a critical moment. "Candidus" staggers from one issue to another, desperately trying to prove that on every single issue the Labour Party was wrong, unpatriotic, stupid, utopian, self-seeking and controlled by rabble-rousers. What hope have they of convincing any but the most prejudiced and ignorant of this argument, after sharing power and responsibility with these sinister characters for the last five years? These books should be given to Tory voters free. They are far more damaging to the Tories than anything Mr. Gollancz ever published.

GRAMOPHONE NOTES

Elgar : *The Dream of Gerontius.* Huddersfield Choral Society, with Heddle Nash, Dennis Noble, and Gladys Ripley. Liverpool Philharmonic Orch., cond. Malcolm Sargent (H.M.V. C3435–46).

Mozart : *Piano Concerto in B flat* (K 450). Kathleen Long, with National Symphony Orch., cond. Boyd Neel (Decca K1121–3).

Heming-Collins : *Threnody for a Soldier killed in Action.* Hallé Orch., cond. Barbirolli (H.M.V. C3427).

Grieg : *Norwegian Dances.* City of Birmingham Orch., cond. George Weldon (Col. DX1192–3).

Rossini : *Barber of Seville Overture.* National Symphony Orch., cond. Karl Rankl (Decca K1125).

Verdi : "E il sol del anima" (*Rigoletto*), and

Puccini : "O soave fanciulla" (*La Bohème*). Jussi Björling and Hjördis Schymberg, with orchestral accompaniment (H.M.V. DB6119).

Gershwin : *Rhapsody in Blue.* Jose and Amparo Iturbi (H.M.V. DB6220–1).

We have had to wait a great many years for a recording of the *Dream*, but we now have the reward of patience. The heavy, elaborate orchestral and choral texture of the work are quite peculiarly difficult to insert into a gramophone, but H.M.V. have succeeded beyond anything I should have thought possible. Of all the music the British Council has chosen to record for export purposes, the *Dream* is the most deeply representative and the most worthy. I know there are many musicians who genuinely dislike this music, finding it harmonically overspiced, and pietistic and provincial in feeling ; I venture to think they are making a hasty and superficial judgment. Bad—that is, in the last resort, hypocritical—religious music is written by worldly men who understand the nature of Evil better than that of Good. Men like Richard Strauss and Saint-Saëns. With Elgar it is quite otherwise ; like Parry and Franck, who both composed genuinely religious music, he was at home in Purgatory and in Heaven, though not, it would seem, in Hell (his demons are unconvincing). But the cosmogony of Cardinal Newman was not really Dantesque : he was not a Renaissance character and he lacked the relentlessness of the Italian poet. It was well for Elgar that this was so : the gentler, less concrete, more romantic imagination of the English theologian exactly suited the tender, brooding, rather melancholy imagination of the composer, with its sudden flashes of *joie de vivre* and its undertow of mysterious power. The emotional effect of the *Dream* is achieved by Wagnerian methods ; and Wagnerian too is Elgar's ability to restrict himself to exactly the right amount of material : he never introduces a new theme until those in hand have been fully exploited, and the onset of each new section is most beautifully timed. Yet the aggregate result is somehow wholly English, and for that reason alone this work deserved the ambassador's passport it has got. Of the performance and recording I can only say that they are magnificent. It is possible to imagine a more spiritual rendering—and indeed one recalls many, in days gone by. But for general rightness, vitality and taste—as well as for the extraordinary fidelity of the recording—this issue must be reckoned an historic one.

If the final Allegro had been played with a little more suppleness and sparkle, the Mozart set might have been an ideal one. Miss Long is at her best ; her style is neat without the hardness which mars Elly Ney's recording of this most engaging work. The Andante *looks* like an Adagio, but the effect is spoilt if it is played too slow—as Elly Ney plays it ; Miss Long does not make that mistake. Do not miss this concerto : it is first-rate Mozart and it is not often performed.

Michael Heming, son of Percy Heming and composer of the sketches for the *Threnody*, was killed in action before completing the work. The ticklish business of making a coherent piece out of fragments was undertaken by Mr. Anthony Collins, and very tactfully and skilfully he has done it. The result—quite a short piece—is far from negligible ; it is grave and romantic, very thoroughly English in feeling and idiom. Without any striking originality, the little work makes a definite and beautiful impression ; in no derogatory sense, it is touching. The performance and recording are on a very high level.

Grieg's *Norwegian Dances* are perennially delightful. The form suits him perfectly, as symphonic development (at which he was weak) is not required. Personally I would rate these dances higher than the far more popular Slavonic Dances of Dvorak—good as those are. Grieg shows here more rhythmical variety in vertical combination, and his harmony is subtler and more inventive than Dvorak's. George Weldon achieves a very vital performance, but there is a good deal of echo and consequent "overlapping" in the *forte* passages.

The overture to *The Barber of Seville* is not the kind of music which it is easy to harm : lightly and obviously scored, it comes off well in recording. The latest issue does not replace Toscanini's ; but it is quite adequate and lower in price.

It seems ungrateful to the British singers who have worked so hard to give us pleasure during the last

Personal

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DOUGLAS Glass is now photographing abroad. His new studio will be opening in the autumn. Watch this column.

THE smoker's heart is full of song ;
He sallies forth to buy Tom Long.

AVOID Furs got by Torture. Write for Fur Crusade leaflets telling how to kill domestic animals and poultry humanely, with comments on various slaughter methods. Major C. Van der Byl, Wappenham, Towcester.

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HOLIDAY Cottage, sleep 5, mod. convs., edge Dartmoor. Box 9074

five years, to express relief at hearing Italian opera sung once more by voices which, though not Italian, can manage *bel canto ;* but that, I am afraid, is what I feel. Here's richness for you !—as Mr. Squeers said. But the heavy, insensitive rhythm of the accompaniment in " E il sol " is something with which we should probably not have to reproach an English performance.

I can perceive no reason for the new version of *Rhapsody in Blue*. The characteristics, hard-boiled and sentimental to a degree, of this clever piece of nonsense are entirely lost if the music is deprived of the qualities of the orchestra—especially of the saxophone. The transcribers have been at pains to render those qualities in terms of the piano, and they appear to have added an enormous and extremely dull cadenza, by way of giving us good measure for our money ; but the result, though brilliantly played, is completely nugatory. One is sorry to see so fine a pianist as Jose Iturbi wasting his time on such gawdy trifles. EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

Week-end Competitions

No. 805

Set by V. S. Pritchett

In one of Disraeli's novels a Catholic lady is described as receiving a guest " with extreme unction." Competitors are invited to make a similarly discreet use of religious metaphor in a brief scene of their own composition. 100 words approx. Entries by July 10.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 802

Set by Sam Smiles

Six guineas are offered for explanations by Jupiter of why he has taken to rationing summer weather as rigorously as the Government rations food and clothes. The explanation to be in eight rhymed couplets.

Report by Sam Smiles

Several " Met.-men " (R.A.F. Weather experts) were among the entrants. The causes most commonly alleged by Jove were the wickedness of men (including election lies), his domestic infelicities, and the demand in the infernal regions for extra fuel to cope with recent arrivals from Germany. Rejecting regretfully the entries of T. L. B., Guy Innes, Stanley J. Sharpless, Arnold Lewes, Silvia Tatham, Sir Robert Witt, Kathleen Vinall, Leslie Johnson, Charles F. Carr, Joyce Johnson, D. H., L. E. J., Allan M. Laing, Pantarei and William Bliss, I recommend a guinea each to E. L. F., Granville Garley, R. J. P. Hewison, Little Billee, Terence Melican and Sub-Lieutenant J. R. Till (with whom I venture to condole upon being no longer an Able Seaman). I wish I had a page available for S. H.'s drawing of Jupiter cutting a ration-book.

(At last a suppliant !) So, you'ld know the reason
Why you have rain both in and out of season ?
Listen, young man. Plagued by my wrangling peers
Who cannot age—or mellow—with the years,
Stinted of reverence due and sacrifice,
Soothed by no mead of tributary spice,
No savoury steam from fat-enfolded joints
(Even ambrosia's now been put on points),
Mocked by a future uniformly bleak
(My Ganymede's deferment ends next week
—Not that that makes much difference because
I'm not the man—forgive me—god I was),
Like poor Prometheus, deathless, on the shelf,
Each age I grow more sorry for myself.
That's why my tears besprinkle leaf and tile
Down on your knees if you would have me smile !

E. L. F.

I never went to public school,
I think an athlete is a fool.
I try to check the sporting fashion
By keeping sunshine on the ration.
And always send down gales and squalls
On those too fond of chasing balls.
A bleak week-end and sodden wicket
Are just the things to hinder cricket.
I keep especially gloomy skies
For golfing types in old school ties.
And tennis players with girlish whinnies,
Deuce take *them* all, the prancing ninnies !
I hope that in the next decade
If I maintain a sun blockade,
Men will arise in every corner
Who'll value Rex before Plum Warner.

GRANVILLE GARLEY

The genial summers your forefathers knew,
Each one a cavalcade of gold and blue,
To Mars are forfeit : that makes every day
Seem one dull blur of intempestive gray.
Vulcan for armaments more heat requires
And requisitions half Apollo's fires ;
These, alienated from their proper use,
The available supply of that reduce,
And in proportion must the Clubfoot's forge
Increase of fume caliginous disgorge.
I, to ensure there's weather to go round,
Perforce the better with the base compound,
Where warmth is short, reconstitute with hail
And fudge with fog when skies of azure fail,
Of clement days dispensing equal dole
That all may some receive. none hog the whole.

R. J. P. HEWISON

" The race of men," said Jupiter,
" Grows stupider and stupider."
I'm weary of their fighting,
Their lying and back-biting.
They flout me and they dare me,
(To tell the truth, they scare me,
These rocket-bombs revolting
Outdo my thunderbolting)
And now, to crown their treasons,
They're monkeying with my seasons !
What ! Summer-time you'll double !
Fools, save yourselves the trouble !
My royal wrath you've prodded,
Now will I show my godhead,
And strike back, in fit fashion—
Halved be your sunshine ration !

" LITTLE BILLEE "

Unworthy man, because you choose
Improperly my gifts to use
I am determined you shall know
What fierce reprisals I bestow
On those who fail to read aright
The signs I've set in summer night
And summer day When were the stars
Ever observed to play at wars ?
By leafy ways in depth of June
I set the key, for all's in tune,
And peace I offer you, yet find
That almost none of human kind
(Save, here and there, a girl or boy)
Heeds my first law : " Thou shalt enjoy."
(Alas, my Greeks !) So take my dole ;
And seek fine weather at the Pole !

TERENCE MELICAN

Leave sunsets to unlettered debs :
A well-read god must please the plebs.
No longer can an author say,
" A golden splendour paved her way " :
Evangelists of Freud and Marx
Prefer the puddles in the parks.
A wholesome suicide or rape
Needs " angry clouds "—to give it shape ;
And dripping rugs make *such* a nice
Environment for lust and lice.
A drenching Chapter One must mean
You've *caught* the proletarian scene.
And poets ? Why, my sunless purge
Creates a new best-selling dirge !
More thunder, then, more rain, more hail—
And after you with " Gems from Gaol."

J. R. TILL

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